ASPEN
VOL. 1
#0
COVER A
MICHAEL TURNER'S
FATHOM
CANNON
HAWKE
MICHAEL
TURNER

VOLUME ONE
Issue Zero

PALADIN OF THE ELITE COUNCIL
DEFENDER OF THE FIRST CIRCLE
GUARDIAN OF THE NINE SEAS
HEIR OF VALLON

AMBASSADOR
TEACHER
HERO

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM
CANNON
H A W K E

MICHAEL TURNER & KOI TURNBULL
— Plot

J.T. KRUL
— Script

KOI TURNBULL
— Pencils

LARRY WELCH
— Inks

BETH SOTELO
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DREAMER DESIGN
— Letters

Fathom Created by — MICHAEL TURNER

Digital Editors: FRANK MASTROMAURO, VINCE HERNANDEZ *Design and Production:* JOSH REED, MARK ROSLAN, PETER STEIGERWALD *Lettering font designed by:* DREAMER DESIGN

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MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM: CANNON HAWKE™ Vol. 1 Issue 0

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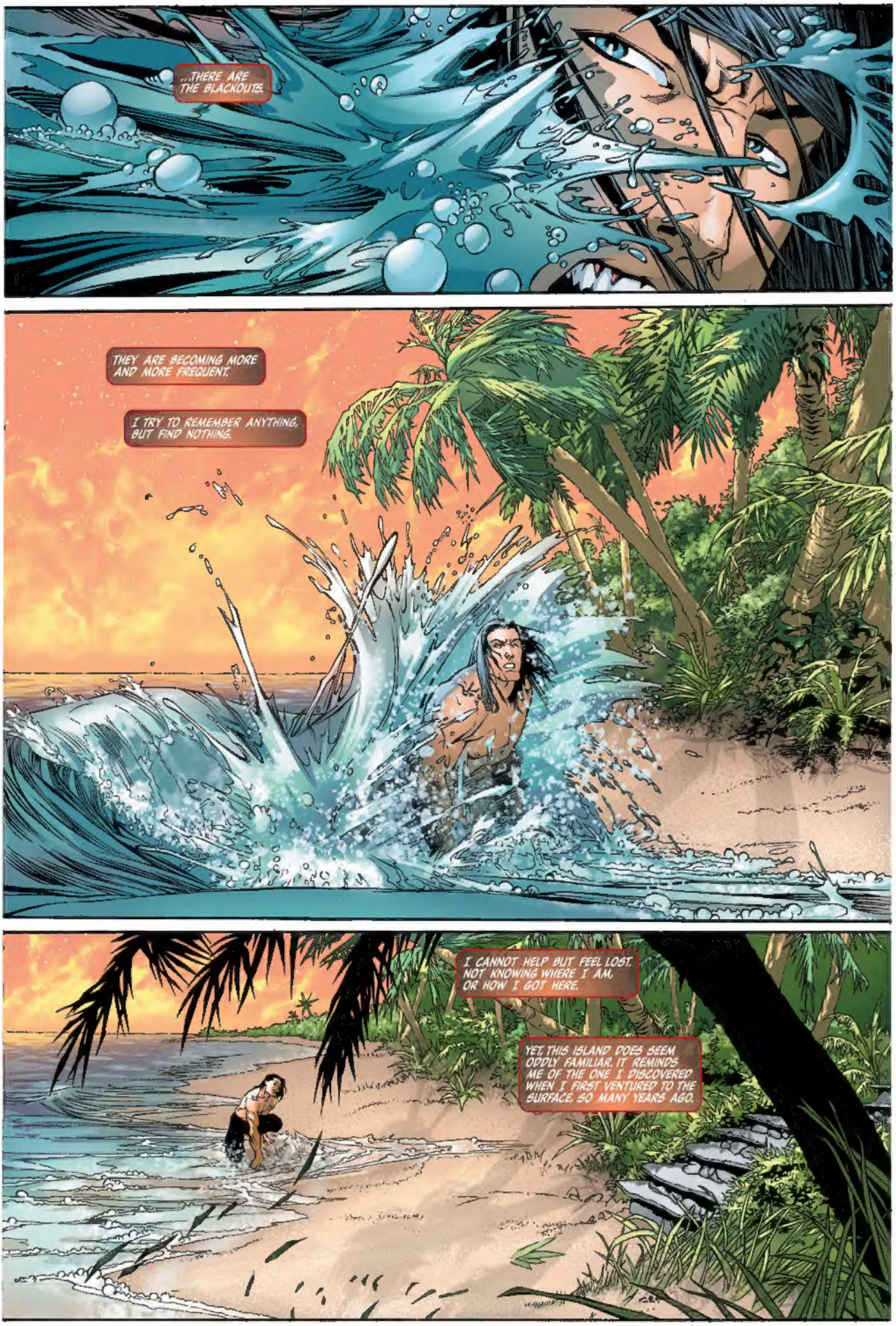
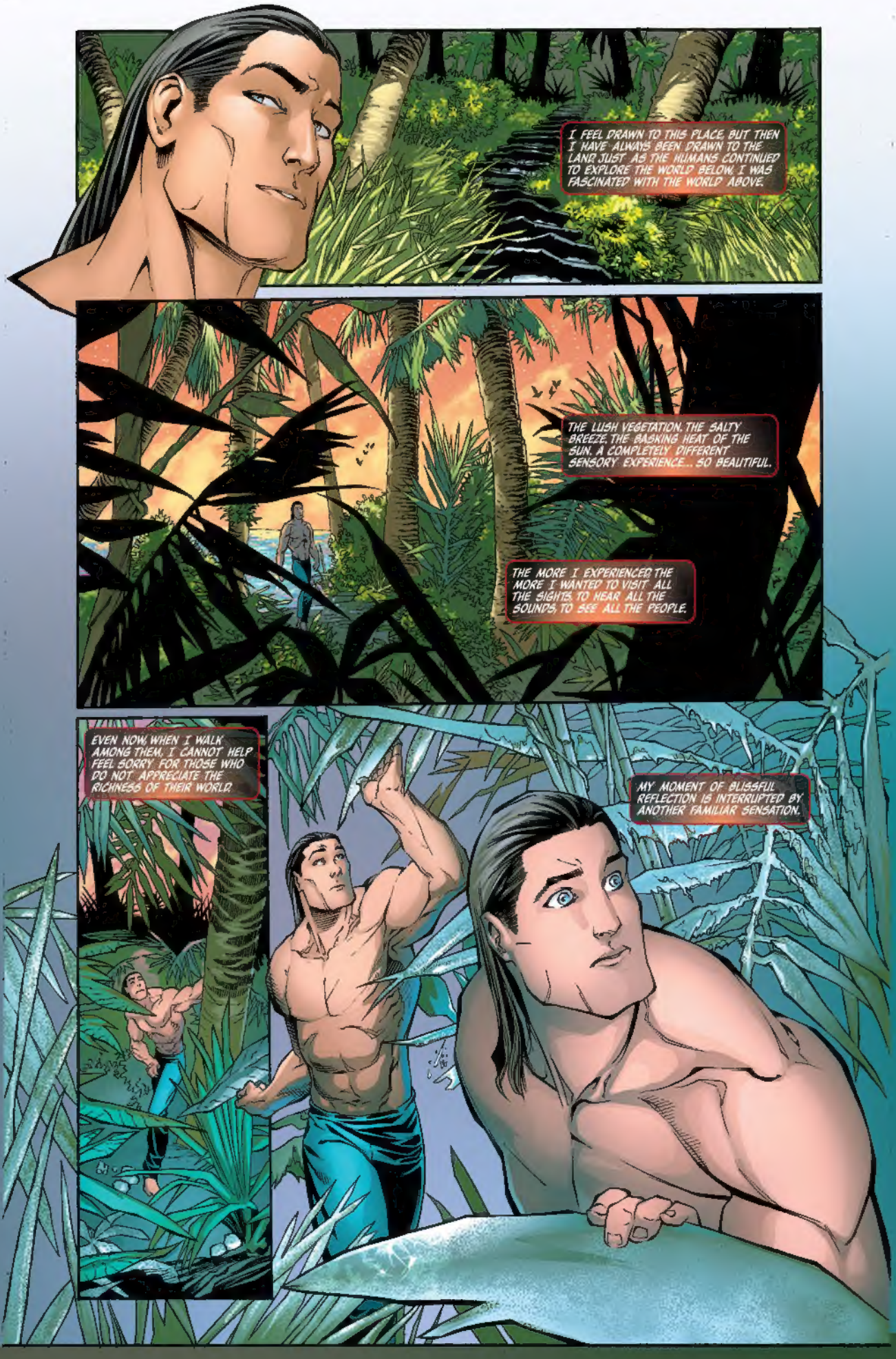
THE CALM WATER AROUND ME CONTRADICTS THE CLIMATE OF THE REST OF MY WORLD.

THE RETURN OF THE BLACK HAS SENT MY PEOPLE INTO A FRENZY. EVEN NOW, THE CAPITAL CITY IS ON THE VERGE OF POLITICAL CHAOS. I MUST HELP MAINTAIN ORDER.
ASPEN IS STILL MISSING. SHE IS A VITAL PART OF OUR FUTURE. KIANI IS LOOKING FOR HER, BUT FINDING ASPEN IS MY MISSION.
ON THE SURFACE, THE HUMANS HAVE BEEN UNSETTLED BY THE RECENT MANIPULATION OF THEIR GREAT LAKES. I MUST DO WHAT I CAN TO ALLEVIATE THEIR FEAR, BEFORE THE WHISPERS OF WAR BECOME SCREAMS.*
EVERYTHING IS IN UTTER TURMOIL.
INCLUDING MYSELF.
NOOO!!
*— SEE MICHAEL TURNER PRESENTS: ASPEN ISSUES #1-3 FOR MORE DETAILS!

I AM NEEDED AND I AM NOT THE TYPE TO AVOID RESPONSIBILITY. BUT HOW CAN I HELP OTHERS WHEN I SEEM UNABLE TO HELP MYSELF?
MY MIND IS UNDER SIEGE.
PLAGUED BY NIGHTMARES AND HAUNTED BY VOICES.
I AM SO COLD.
EVEN IN THIS TEMPERATE CLIMATE, IT IS AS IF A SHADOW LOOMS OVER ME, CHILLING MY VERY SOUL.
AND THEN...

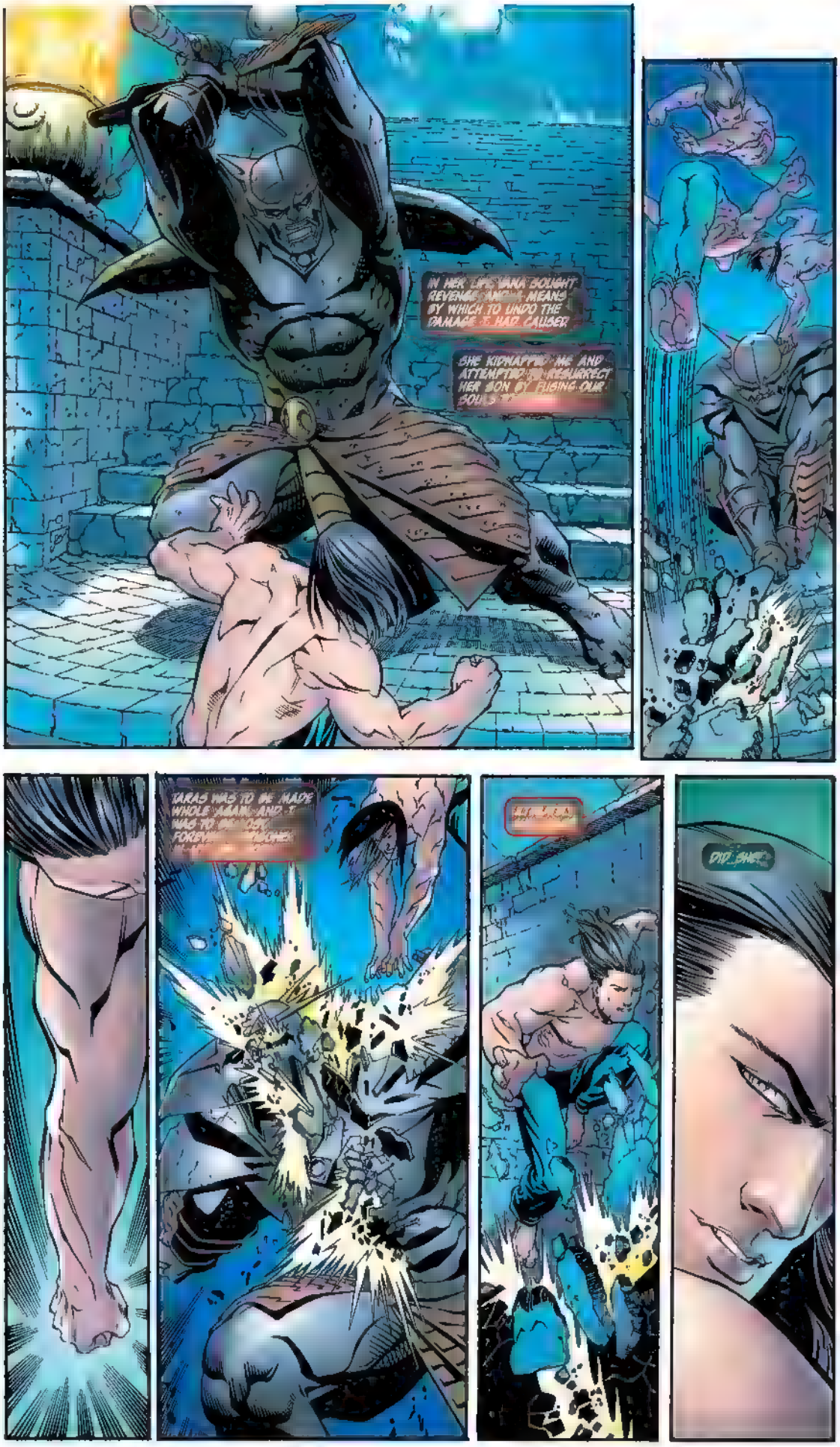

...THERE ARE THE BLACKOUTS.
THEY ARE BECOMING MORE AND MORE FREQUENT.
I TRY TO REMEMBER ANYTHING, BUT FIND NOTHING.
I CANNOT HELP BUT FEEL LOST. NOT KNOWING WHERE I AM, OR HOW I GOT HERE.
YET, THIS ISLAND DOES SEEM ODDLY FAMILIAR. IT REMINDS ME OF THE ONE I DISCOVERED WHEN I FIRST VENTURED TO THE SURFACE, SO MANY YEARS AGO.


I FEEL DRAWN TO THIS PLACE, BUT THEN I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN DRAWN TO THE LAND. JUST AS THE HUMANS CONTINUED TO EXPLORE THE WORLD BELOW, I WAS FASCINATED WITH THE WORLD ABOVE.
THE LUSH VEGETATION. THE SALTY BREEZE. THE BASKING HEAT OF THE SUN. A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT SENSORY EXPERIENCE... SO BEAUTIFUL.
THE MORE I EXPERIENCED, THE MORE I WANTED TO VISIT ALL THE SIGHTS, TO HEAR ALL THE SOUNDS, TO SEE ALL THE PEOPLE.
EVEN NOW, WHEN I WALK AMONG THEM, I CANNOT HELP FEEL SORRY FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT APPRECIATE THE RICHNESS OF THEIR WORLD.
MY MOMENT OF BLISSFUL REFLECTION IS INTERRUPTED BY ANOTHER FAMILIAR SENSATION.

THAT INESCAPABLE SHIVER DOWN MY BACK.

IS THIS TEMPLE THE BEACON THAT HAS PULLED ME TO THIS ISLAND?
I RECOGNIZE THESE STATUES. THEY ARE THE ANCESTORS OF THE BLUE OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC.
A TRULY RUTHLESS TRIBE. THEY PREFERRED THE ICY REGION OF THE PLANET. FOR IT SERVED AS A MORE FITTING MATCH TO THEIR COLD HEARTS.
AND NONE WAS COLDER THAN THEIR QUEEN'S HEART...
...VANA.
THE GLARING EYES OF THESE SENTRIES TURN MY WAY.
PERHAPS THEY ARE RESPONDING TO THE LINGERING HATRED FOR ME THAT VANA EXUDES EVEN FROM HER TOMB.

I WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF A MAN NAMED TARAS.
HE BETRAYED US IN THE BATTLE OF THE BLUE SUN AT CHANARNAY, WHEN HE CHOSE TO STAND AT KILLIAN'S SIDE.
I SENT TARAS FLAILING INTO THE BEAM OF THE BLUE SUN. ITS ENERGY DESTROYED HIM.
HE WAS A TRAITOR.
HE WAS A VILLAIN.
HE WAS HER SON.


IN HER LIFE, KIARA SOUGHT REVENGE. ANOTHER MEANS BY WHICH TO UNDO THE DAMAGE SHE HAD CAUSED.
SHE KIDNAPPED ME AND ATTEMPTED TO RESURRECT HER SON BY FUSING OUR SOULS.
KIARAS WAS TO BE MADE WHOLE AGAIN, AND I WAS TO
DID SHE?

I'VE BEEN WAITING A LONG TIME TO DO THIS, CANNON.
AND, YET, HERE I AM.
CALL THIS A CHANGING OF THE GUARD CANNON. YOU MAY HAVE BEEN THE ONE TO WALK INTO THIS TEMPLE
BUT I'LL BE THE ONE WALKING OUT!
DO I LOOK DEAD?
DO I FEEL REAL?

CANNON, YOU DON'T HAVE THE POWER TO STOP ME.
YOUR POWER BELONGS TO ME, NOW.
YOUR WATER IS MY ICE.
THE DAYS OF CANNON ARE OVER.
THE TIME HAS COME.
...FOR MY RETURN.

I FEEL HOLLOW INSIDE. A SHELL OF THE MAN I USED TO BE. I'M NO GOOD
YOU'RE NOT LOSING YOUR MIND CANNON.
I'M TALKING TO
GET OUT OF MY HEAD!
TO BE CONTINUED...

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CANNON
HAWKE
BEGINNINGS
MICHAEL TURNER

VOLUME ONE
Beginnings

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OLIVIA CHADHA
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KOI TURNBULL
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PETER STEIGERWALD & CHRISTINA STRAIN
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TOKYO, PRESENT DAY.
IT'S SO STRANGE HOW THE SMALLEST DROP
SO UNSUSPECTING AND MINUTE
AND A MESSENGER OF CHAOS AND OF
GOOD THING I LOVE THE RAIN.

BUT IT'S BEEN RAINING FOR TWELVE WEEKS NOW BECAUSE OF WHAT SOME ARE CALLING A SIGN
I DON'T KNOW IF THIS HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH KILLIAN'S POWER PLAY OR IF THEY ARE JUST LOOKING FOR MEANING WITHIN A CATASTROPHE THEY COULDN'T
THEY FIND HOPE IN THE UNEXPLAINABLE
IT IS BIZARRE BUT I'M MUCH MORE OF A REALIST
THE ISLAND IS WATERLOGGED AND WEATHERMEN ACROSS THE GLOBE ARE
I LISTEN TO MY INSTINCT. THE GUT FEELING THAT SHOWS YOU
I KNOW THERE IS A REASON FOR EVERYTHING.
THERE IS A REASON I FELT THE NEED TO RETURN TO THIS CITY AFTER
SOME CAUSES ARE WORTH INVESTIGATING.
I HAVE A FEELING THIS IS GOING TO

«MR. HAWKE, IT'S GOOD THAT YOU HAVE RETURNED TO THE CITY, THOUGH I KNOW IT MUST BE DIFFICULT FOR YOU.»
«YOU WEREN'T EASY TO FIND»
«AS I TOLD YOU BACK AT THE DMD, MR. TAKASHI, I WILL ALWAYS BE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST YOU IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE.»
«PLEASE SIT. IT'S BEEN FAR TOO LONG SINCE OUR LAST CONVERSATION.»
«YES, FAR TOO LONG. I ASSUME THAT YOUR WORK IS REWRITING THEORIES OF PHYSICS AND CHEMISTRY AS USUAL.»
«I HAVE FOUND A NEOTERIC SUBSTANCE THAT I BELIEVE IS CONNECTED TO THE STORMS.»
«I AM CLOSE TO DECIPHERING ITS ORIGINS, BUT IT'S TOO DANGEROUS NOW.»
«YOU SEE, EVERYONE ON MY TEAM HAS DIED. I AM THE ONLY ONE.»
«DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHO IS BEHIND THIS?»
«NO. BUT I BELIEVE MY WORK INTERESTS MANY PEOPLE— PEOPLE WHO DESIRE POWER NOT SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY.»
«THAT SITUATION SOUNDS FAMILIAR. I NEVER DID ASK YOU.»
«WHY I LEFT THE DMD? I SAW THEY WERE TURNING A THING OF BEAUTY INTO A MACHINE OF WAR. THEY SAW POWER AND DEATH IN EVERYTHING.»
«AND YOU SAW THE BEAUTY OF SCIENCE.»
«CANNON, YOU MUST BE AWARE THAT MY PROJECT MIGHT BE WALKING THAT SAME THIN LINE. THIS IS WHY I CONTACTED YOU. I NEED YOUR HELP.»
«TELL ME WHAT I CAN DO, AND CONSIDER IT DONE.»
TRANSLATED FROM JAPANESE

<PLEASE, TAKE THIS SAMPLE OF THE SUBSTANCE. IT WAS FOUND FLOATING NEAR THE LAST SURFACE DISTURBANCE.>
<IT'S THE ONLY PIECE OF MY RESEARCH LEFT; I DESTROYED EVERYTHING ELSE.>
<YOU THINK THIS IS CAUSING THE RAIN?>
<I BELIEVE IT IS DOING MUCH MORE THAN THAT.>
<...AND THE 'SURFACE DISTURBANCE?'>
<THE DISTURBANCES APPEAR TO-- OH MY GOD...>

<NO!>

«STAND DOWN SIR. THIS IS NONE OF YOUR CONCERN.»
«YOU'VE MADE IT MY CONCERN.»
«HE'S NOT HUMAN!»
«WE AREN'T EQUIPPED FOR THIS—»
«OUR INTEL WAS WRONG! HE'S BACK IN TOKYO. WE NEED TO START PHASE TWO IMMEDIATELY!»
«WHO ARE YOU WORKING FOR?»
«TELL ME NOW!»
«AN—ANO—»
«ANO YUR—»

AARRGGGHH!!
ELECTROCUTED BY HIS OWN AUTO
LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE WANTS TO KEEP THEIR SECRET SAFE
ALL THIS DEATH FOR WHAT?
BLEEP
AKIKO.
HELLO, MR. HAWKE. HOW WAS THE MEETING?
IT'S DONE.
ARE YOU ALRIGHT? YOU SOUND--
I'M FINE. I WILL BE THERE SHORTLY.
THERE ARE QUESTIONS AND THEN THERE ARE ANSWERS. SOMETIMES WE GET LUCKY AND WE RECOGNIZE WHY THINGS HAPPEN, BUT FOR THE MOST PART WE JUST GET THROUGH AS BEST WE CAN.
I WAS RELUCTANT TO RETURN TO THIS CITY. I HAVE A LOT ON MY MIND AND I DON'T LIKE MYSTERIOUS INTERRUPTIONS, OR OLD COLLEAGUES MURDERED IN FRONT OF ME. I NEARLY IGNORED TAKASHI'S CALL BUT I FELT COMPELLED
MAYBE I WAS MEANT TO PUT THE PIECES OF THE PUZZLE TOGETHER. MAYBE TO REVISIT SOME GHOSTS.
I CAN'T SAY EXACTLY WHAT WILL HAPPEN, BUT THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT ARE CERTAIN.
I WILL INVESTIGATE THE DEATH THAT SURROUNDS THIS
I WILL IDENTIFY ITS
AND I WILL DEFEND THE UNEQUIVOCAL LINE BETWEEN POWER AND RECOVERY.
THE QUESTION IS: AM I IN THE MIDDLE OF A STORM, OR IS THIS MERELY THE FIRST RAINDROP OF AN EVEN GREATER ONE?
BEGINNING.

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CANNON
H A W K E
PRELUDE
MICHAEL TURNER

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Prelude

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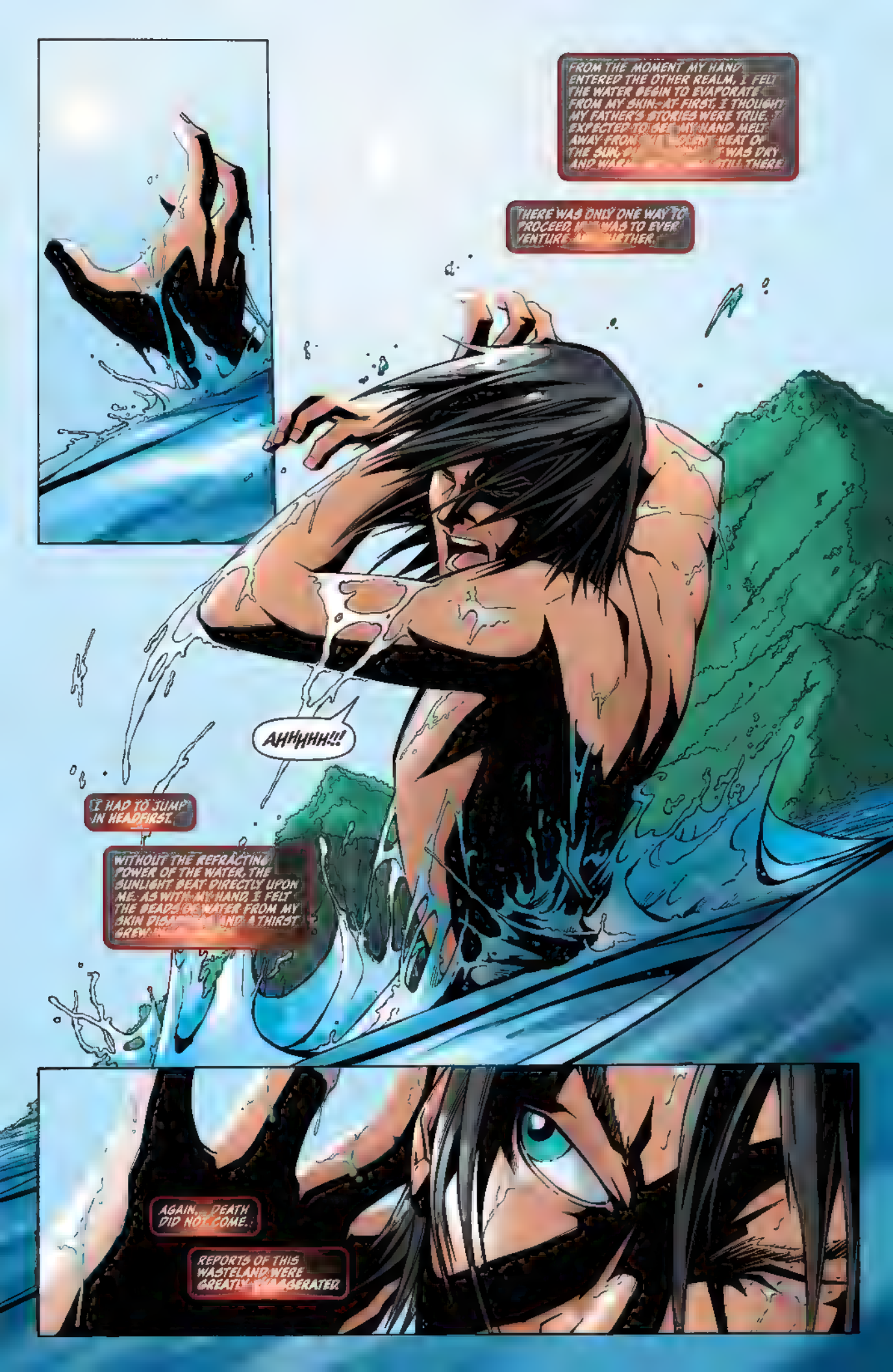
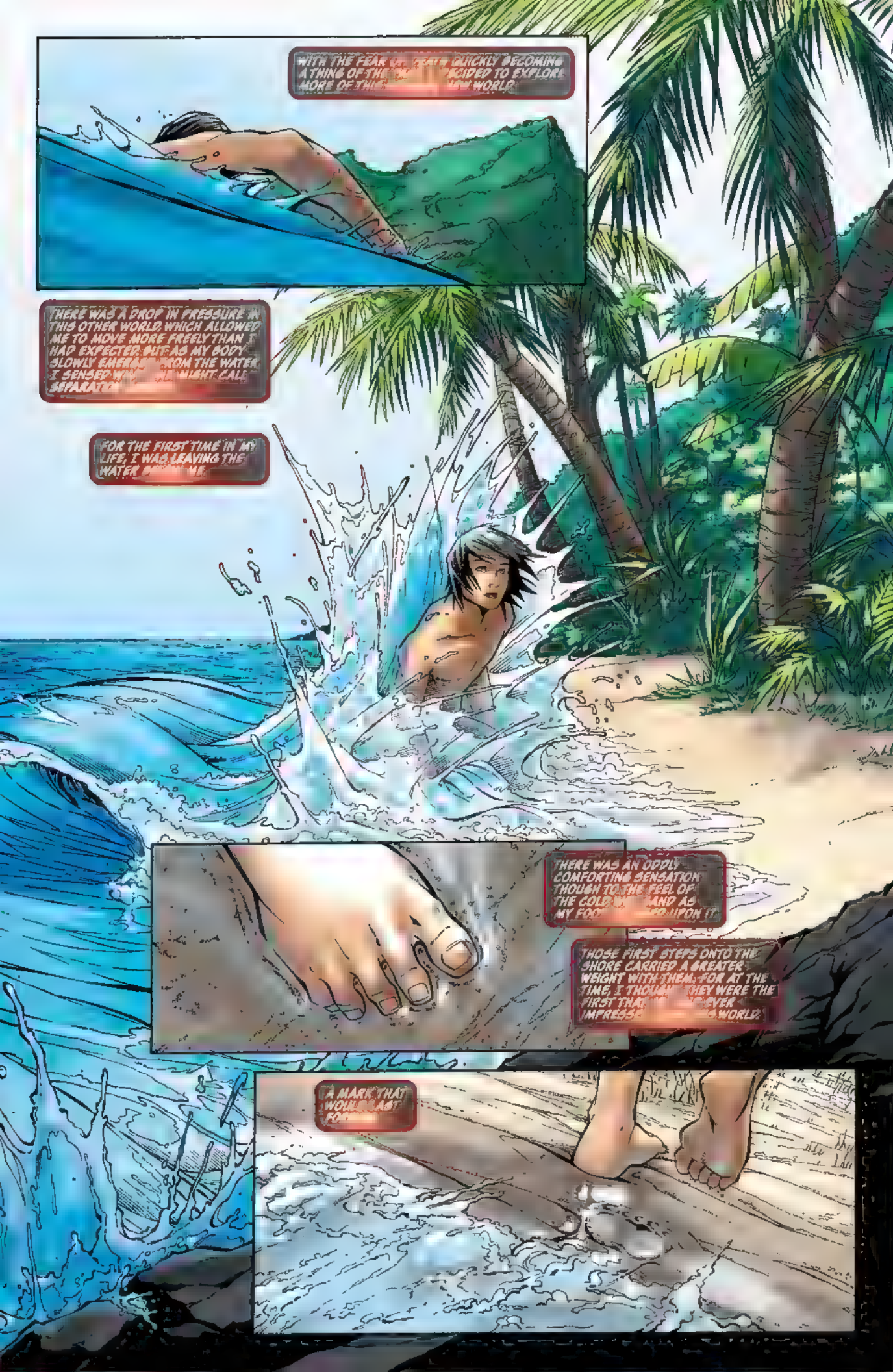
SOMETIMES IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO TRULY UNDERSTAND THE REALITY OF YOUR WORLD. IT MAY SEEM BOTH SMALL AND INFINITE AT THE SAME TIME.
YOU CANNOT RELY ON YOUR LIMITED EXPERIENCES TO DEFINE YOUR WORLD. SO, YOU MUST TRUST THE WORD OF THOSE YOU LOOK FOR ANSWERS.
FOR ME, THAT PERSON WAS MASTER VALLON.
THE FUNNY THING ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE OF LIFE AND THE WISDOM GAINED FROM IT, WHAT MOST YOUNG PEOPLE FAIL TO UNDERSTAND IS THAT

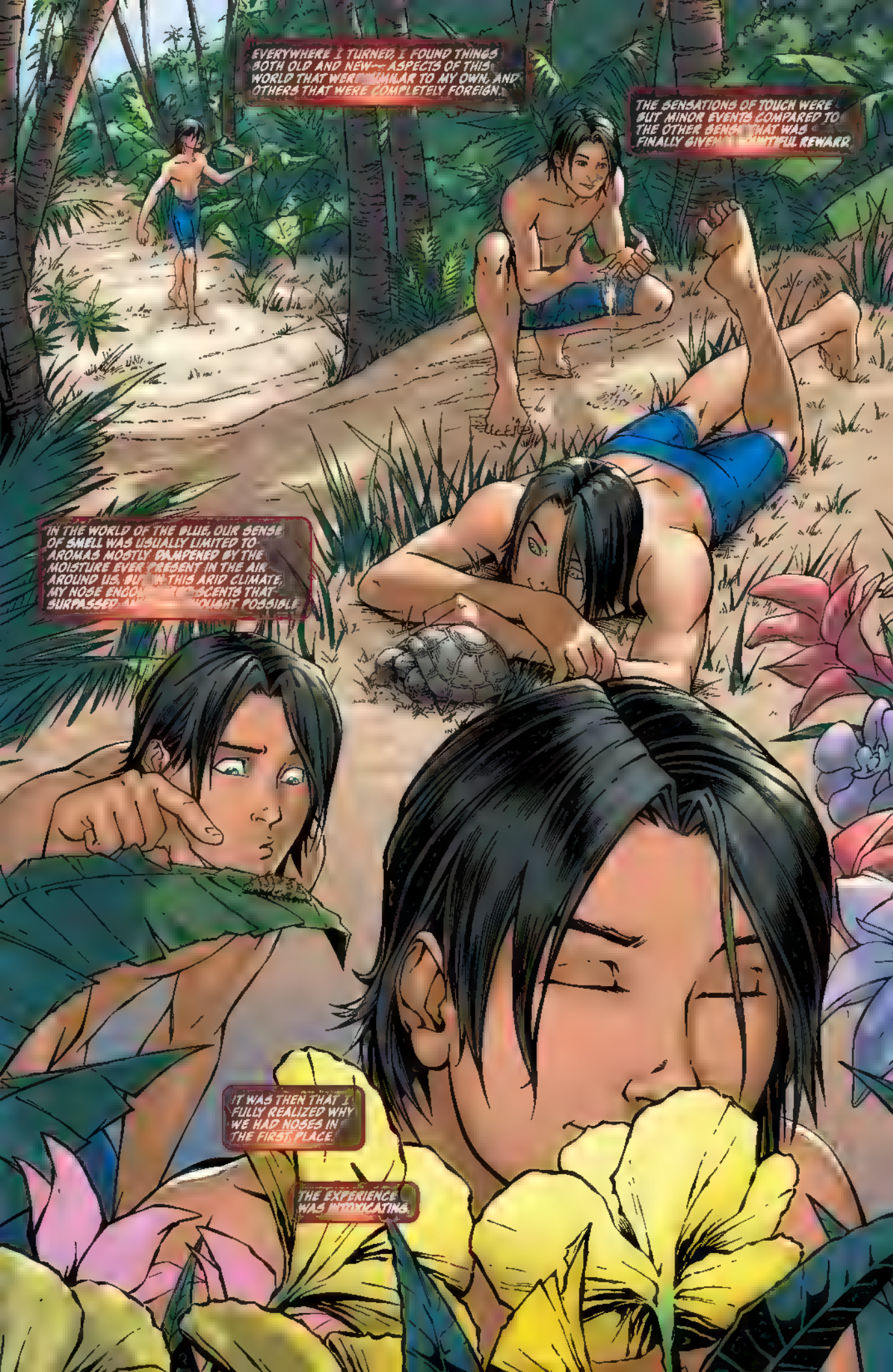
...IT MUST BE A
OUR WORLD WAS RICH AND VAST, BUT THAT DID NOT STOP ME FROM WONDERING ABOUT
BEYOND.
...BEYOND OUR WORLD.
WHENEVER THE SUBJECT CAME UP, MY FATHER SIMPLY DESCRIBED THE WORLD ABOVE AS A BARREN WASTELAND OF DEATH: A PLACE WITH TEMPERATURES SO INTENSE THAT TO

IT WAS THE SAME STORY ALL MY FRIENDS HAD HEARD FROM THEIR FATHERS. AND WHILE THEY SEEMED CONTENT TO ACCEPT SUCH ANSWERS, I COULD NOT. FOR ONE CANNOT REACH ANY TRUTH MERELY BY ADOPTING THE WORD OF ANOTHER. EVEN THOSE
ONE DAY, I DECIDED THAT I HAD TO SEE FOR MYSELF
THE EDGE OF OUR WORLD WAS THE ONE PLACE I WAS FORBIDDEN TO GO.
SO NATURALLY, IT WAS THE ONE PLACE I COULD NOT WAIT TO SEE.


FROM THE MOMENT MY HAND ENTERED THE OTHER REALM, I FELT THE WATER BEGIN TO EVAPORATE FROM MY SKIN. AT FIRST, I THOUGHT MY FATHER'S STORIES WERE TRUE. I EXPECTED TO SEE MY HAND MELT AWAY FROM
THE SUN.
AND WA
WAS DRY
STILL THERE
THERE WAS ONLY ONE WAY TO PROCEED.
WAS TO EVER VENTURE
URTHER.
AHHHHH!!!
I HAD TO JUMP IN HEADFIRST.
WITHOUT THE REFRACTING POWER OF THE WATER, THE SUNLIGHT BEAT DIRECTLY UPON ME. AS WITH MY HAND, I FELT THE DEADLY WATER FROM MY SKIN DISA
ND A THIRST GREW
AGAIN, DEATH DID NOT COME.
REPORTS OF THIS WASTELAND WERE GREATLY
AGGERATED.

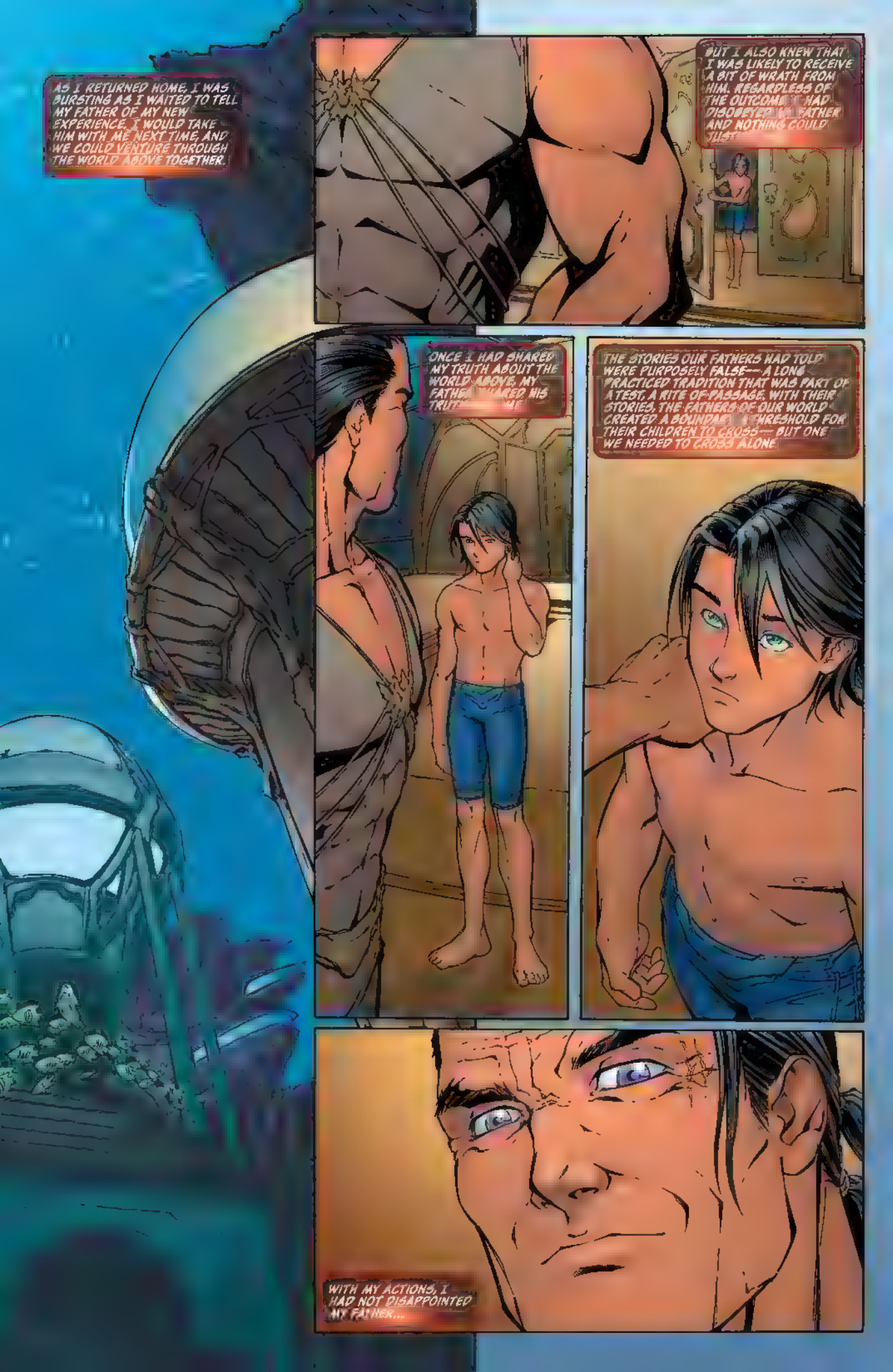

WITH THE FEAR
A THING OF TH
MORE OF THIS
THERE WAS A DROP IN PRESSURE IN THIS OTHER WORLD, WHICH ALLOWED ME TO MOVE MORE FREELY THAN I HAD EXPECTED. BUT AS MY BODY SLOWLY EMERG
I SENSED W
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE, I WAS LEAVING THE WATER
THERE WAS AN ODDLY
THOUGH TO THE FEEL OF
THE COLD
MY FOO
THOSE FIRST STEPS ONTO THE SHORE CARRIED A GREATER WEIGHT WITH THEM; FOR AT THE TIME, I THOUGH
FIRST THA
IMPRESS
A MARK THAT
FO

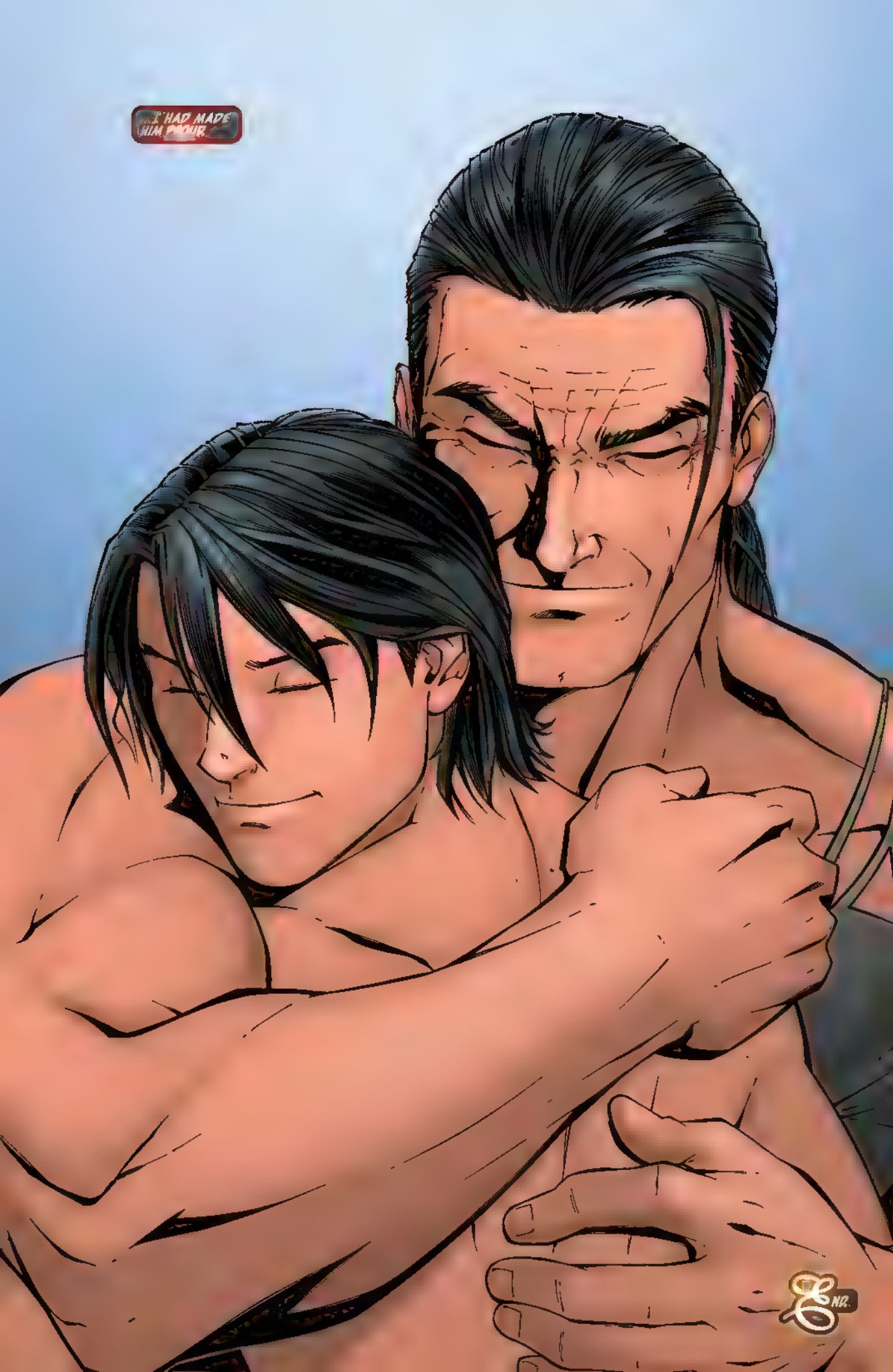
IN MY MIND, I WAS A CHAMPION OF MY PEOPLE, HAVING CONQUERED A NEEDLESS FEAR AND LACK OF UNDERSTANDIN[G] BELIEVED BY ALL INCLUDING M[E]
...AS I ROAMED WHERE NO CREATURE FROM BELOW HAD VENTURED BEFORE.
...OR SO I THOUGHT.
...UNTIL I WAS GIVEN A HEALTHY DOSE OF HUMILITY IN THE FORM OF A VER[Y] FEMALE AND VERY FE[W] FRIEND


EVERYWHERE I TURNED, I FOUND THINGS BOTH OLD AND NEW-- ASPECTS OF THIS WORLD THAT WERE SIMILAR TO MY OWN, AND OTHERS THAT WERE COMPLETELY FOREIGN.
THE SENSATIONS OF TOUCH WERE BUT MINOR EVENTS COMPARED TO THE OTHER SENSES THAT WAS FINALLY GIVEN ITS PLENTIFUL REWARD.
IN THE WORLD OF THE BLUE, OUR SENSE OF SMELL WAS USUALLY LIMITED TO AROMAS MOSTLY DAMPENED BY THE MOISTURE EVER PRESENT IN THE AIR AROUND US. BUT IN THIS ARID CLIMATE, MY NOSE ENCOUNTERED SCENTS THAT SURPASSED ANYTHING I THOUGHT POSSIBLE.
IT WAS THEN THAT I FULLY REALIZED WHY WE HAD NOSES IN THE FIRST PLACE.
THE EXPERIENCE WAS INTOXICATING.

BUT, NOTHING COULD HAVE PREPARED ME FOR THE GREATEST DISC
THE DISCOVERY OF
KAAWWWK!
AS I WATCHED IT, I SAW ALL THAT I HOPED
IT DID NOT FEAR MY PRESENCE, STANDING PROUD AND DEFIANT, FULLY AWARE
ABOVE MY WORLD, AND ABOVE THIS OTHER WORLD: THE MAGNIFICENT CREATURE DWELLED IN YET A
WITH A SMOOTH MAJESTY, THE CREATURE GLIDED DOWN AND
THAT DAY PROVED TO BE A NEW BEGINNING FOR ME. I WOULD

I WOULD BECOME CANNON HAWKE


AS I RETURNED HOME, I WAS BURSTING AS I WAITED TO TELL MY FATHER OF MY NEW EXPERIENCE. I WOULD TAKE HIM WITH ME NEXT TIME, AND WE COULD VENTURE THROUGH THE WORLD ABOVE TOGETHER.
BUT I ALSO KNEW THAT I WAS LIKELY TO RECEIVE A BIT OF WRATH FROM HIM. REGARDLESS OF THE OUTCOME, I HAD DISOBEYED MY FATHER AND NOTHING COULD JUST
ONCE I HAD SHARED MY TRUTH ABOUT THE WORLD ABOVE, MY FATHER
THE STORIES OUR FATHERS HAD TOLD WERE PURPOSELY FALSE— A LONG PRACTICED TRADITION THAT WAS PART OF A TEST, A RITE OF PASSAGE. WITH THEIR STORIES, THE FATHERS OF OUR WORLD CREATED A BOUNDARY, A THRESHOLD FOR THEIR CHILDREN TO CROSS— BUT ONE WE NEEDED TO CROSS ALONE
WITH MY ACTIONS, I HAD NOT DISAPPOINTED MY FATHER...


I HAD MADE
HIM POUR.
END.

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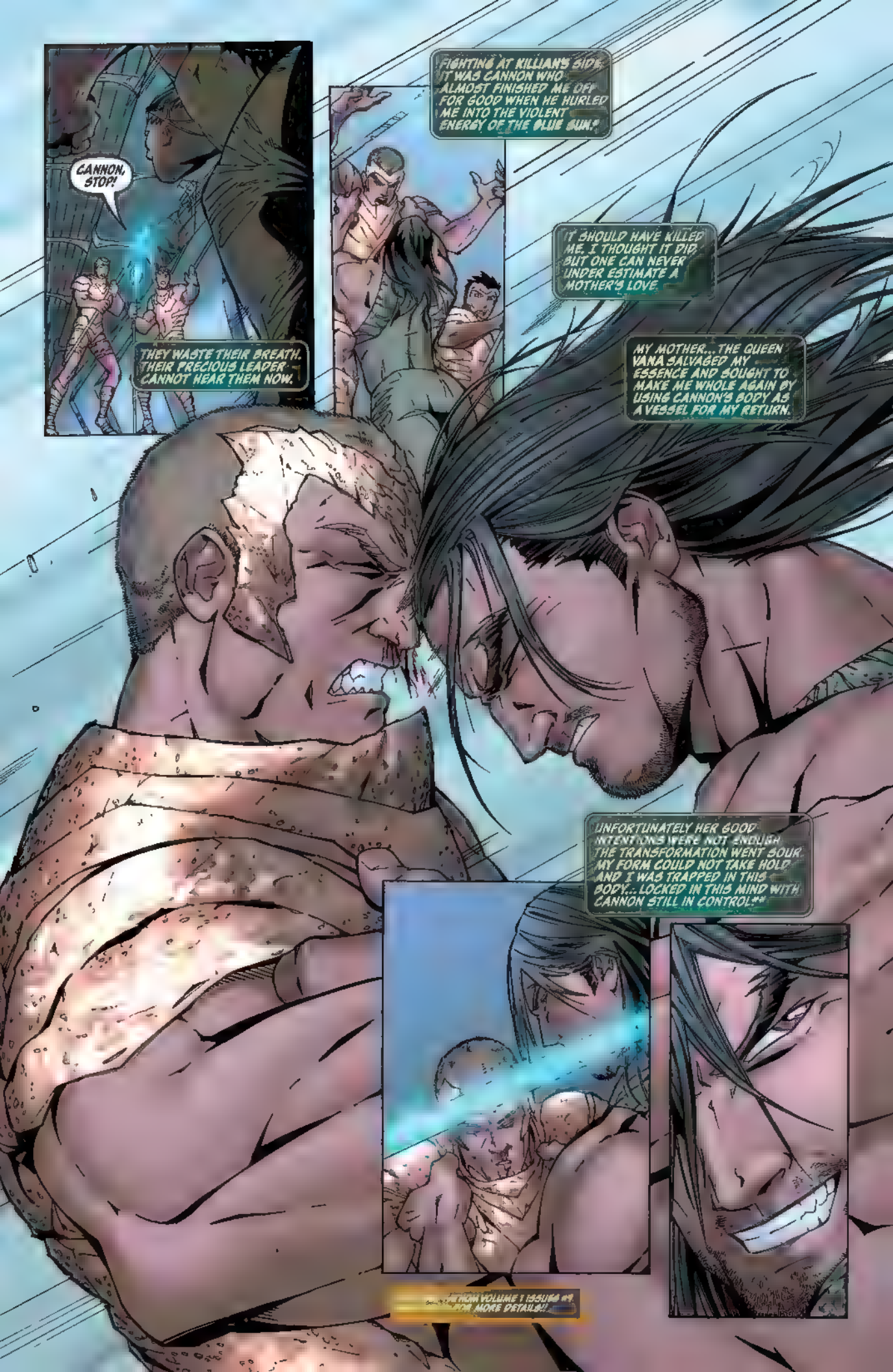
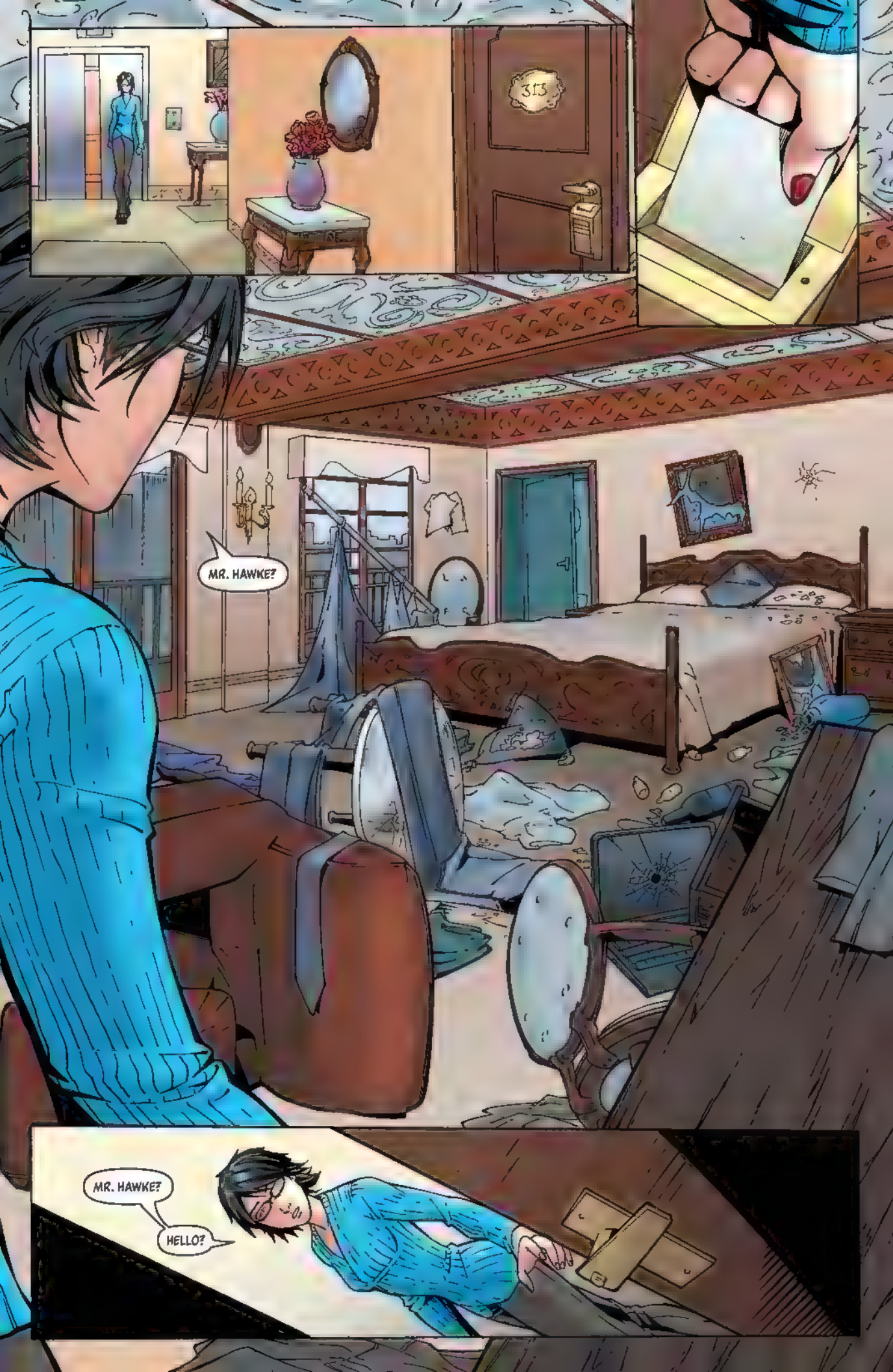
I FOUGHT MY ENTIRE LIFE FOR WHAT I BELIEVE IN--- FOR THE SURVIVAL OF MY PEOPLE. WHILE SOME CHOSE TO STAND IDLY BY AND LET THE WORLD COME CRASHING DOWN AROUND THEM, I STOOD WITH OTHERS THAT FOUGHT AGAINST THOSE WHO WOULD DO US HARM.
BUT, I WAS BETRAYED BY THOSE SAME PEOPLE WHO WOULD RATHER HIDE IN THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN THAN PROTECT THEIR OWN FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD.
BUT I CONTINUE TO FIGHT.

BECAUSE TARAS
CANNOT BE STOPPED


CANNON, STOP!
THEY WASTE THEIR BREATH. THEIR PRECIOUS LEADER CANNOT HEAR THEM NOW.
FIGHTING AT KILLIAN'S SIDE, IT WAS CANNON WHO ALMOST FINISHED ME OFF FOR GOOD WHEN HE HURLED ME INTO THE VIOLENT ENERGY OF THE BLUE SUN.*
IT SHOULD HAVE KILLED ME. I THOUGHT IT DID. BUT ONE CAN NEVER UNDER ESTIMATE A MOTHER'S LOVE.
MY MOTHER... THE QUEEN VANA SALVAGED MY ESSENCE AND SOUGHT TO MAKE ME WHOLE AGAIN BY USING CANNON'S BODY AS A VESSEL FOR MY RETURN.
UNFORTUNATELY HER GOOD INTENTIONS WERE NOT ENOUGH. THE TRANSFORMATION WENT SOUR. MY FORM COULD NOT TAKE HOLD AND I WAS TRAPPED IN THIS BODY... LOCKED IN THIS MIND WITH CANNON STILL IN CONTROL!**
*FROM VOLUME 1 ISSUES #1 FOR MORE DETAILS!!

CANNON IS STRONG, BUT THERE COME TIMES THAT EVEN HE MUST LET HIS GUARD DOWN. THAT IS WHEN I HAVE THE CHANCE TO USE THIS BODY AS IF IT WERE MY VERY OWN.
AND NOW I AM GETTING STRONGER.
SOON... I WILL TAKE CLAIM OF THIS BODY AND MIND, ONCE AND FOR ALL.

CZECH REPUBLIC
AH, MS. NIGATA, I WAS TRULY SORRY TO TROUBLE YOU, BUT I DID NOT KNOW WHO ELSE TO CONTACT.
NO APOLOGY IS NECESSARY. I SHOULD BE THANKING YOU.
AS I SAID ON THE PHONE, MR. HAWKE CHECKED IN ALONE LAST THURSDAY. HE DIDN'T HAVE A RESERVATION, BUT NATURALLY WE FOUND ACCOMMODATIONS FOR HIM. THAT WAS SIX DAYS AGO AND HE HASN'T LEFT THE ROOM SINCE.
NOT ONLY THAT, BUT THE OTHER GUESTS ON THE FLOOR HAVE PHONED WITH COMPLAINTS ABOUT LOUD NOISES AND SHOUTING. MR. HAWKE HAS STAYED WITH US ON SO MANY OCCASIONS. TO US, HE IS MORE THAN JUST A GUEST HERE; WE FEEL HE IS FAMILY. MY ONLY CONCERN IS FOR H.S WELL-BEING.
IT IS ROOM THREE-THIRTEEN, THE SUITE ON THE THIRD FLOOR. I WOULD BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO ACCOMPANY YOU.
THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY. I'LL TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING. AND ONCE AGAIN, I APPREC.ATE YOUR TACT IN HANDLING THE SITUATION. I KNOW MR. HAWKE WILL FEEL THE SAME WAY.
THANK YOU. IF THERE IS ANYTHING YOU NEED, PLEASE CALL ME AT ONCE.
1
2
3
DING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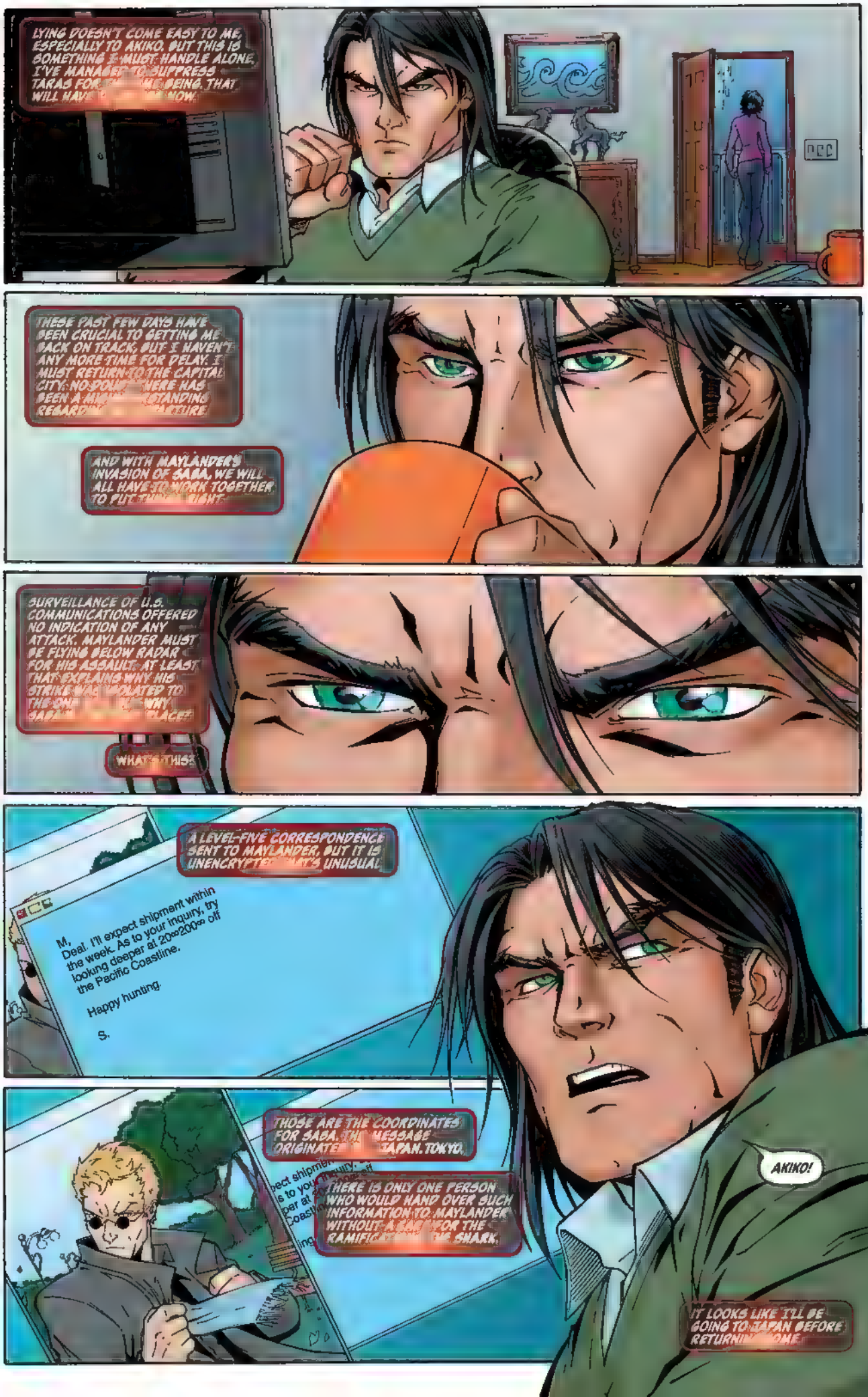
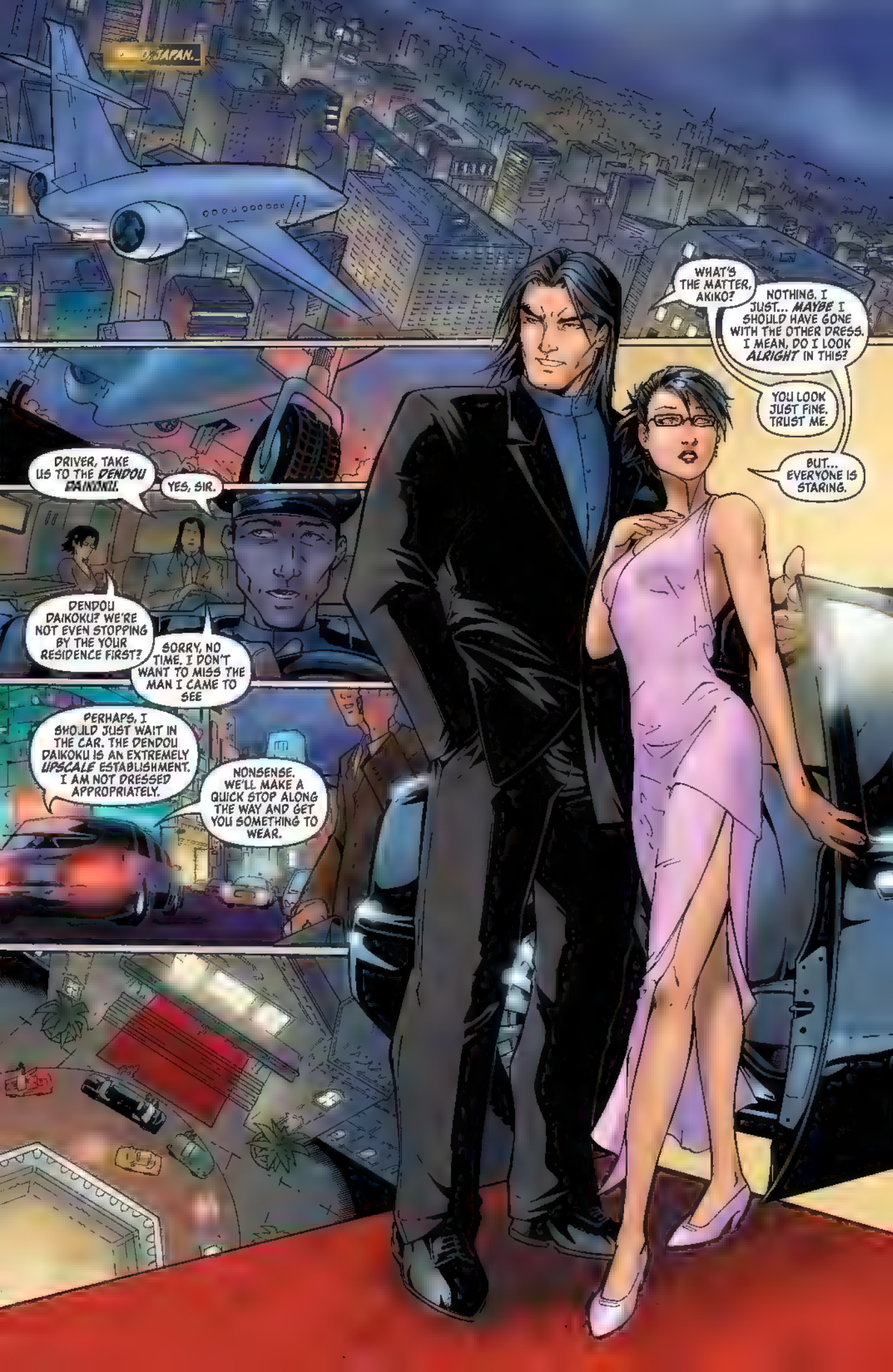
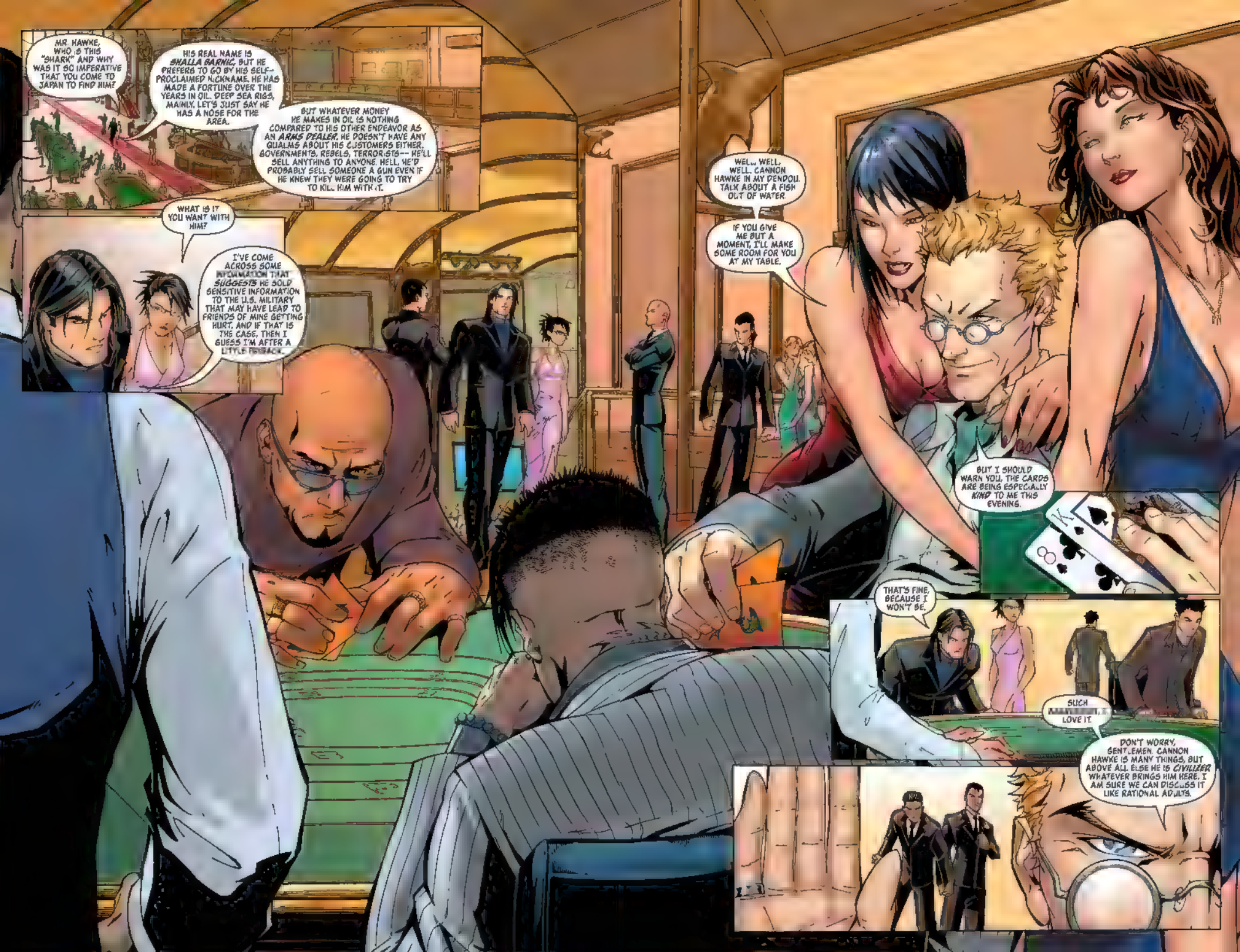
MR. HAWKE?
MR. HAWKE?
HELLO?

CANNON!
CANNON, IT'S ME... AKIKO. ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
AKIKO? ARE YOU REAL? ARE YOU HERE?
YES, I'M HERE. I'M REALLY HERE.
HE'S *PLAYING* WITH MY HEAD. I KNOW IT. I CANNOT TELL WHAT IS REAL AND WHAT IS NOT ANYMORE. I CAN FEEL HIM WAITING NOW... WAITING FOR HIS OPPORTUNITY.
I'M SO TIRED, SO VERY TIRED. I CANNOT DO THIS ANYMORE.
IT'S OKAY.

LUNCH?
THANK YOU, AKIKO. JUST SET IT DOWN. I'LL GET TO IT IN A MINUTE.
I FAIL TO SEE HOW THIS GETAWAY WILL REJUVENATE YOU, IF YOU DO NOT TAKE THE TIME TO ACTUALLY REST.
I'M JUST CHECKING ON A FEW THINGS. IT DOESN'T TAKE ANY EFFORT TO SIT HERE AND PUSH BUTTONS.
EXCELLENT. THEN YOU SHOULD HAVE NO PROBLEM EATING WHILE YOU DO IT.
MR. HAWKE, SINCE I FOUND YOU IN PRAGUE LAST WEEK, YOU HAVEN'T SAID MUCH ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED, AND I HAVEN'T ASKED.
I KNOW. THANK YOU.
BUT OBVIOUSLY SOMETHING IS WRONG AND I CANNOT JUST STAND BY WHILE YOU TRY TO SIMPLY FORGET ABOUT IT AND GO ALONG AS IF NOTHING HAPPENED. I MEAN YOU WON'T EVEN PERMIT ME TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TO SEE A DOCTOR.
I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN, AKIKO, AND ALL THAT YOU HAVE DONE FOR ME. BELIEVE ME, I HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN ANYTHING AND AM DOING WHAT IS NECESSARY TO TAKE CARE OF THE PROBLEM. THERE IS NO NEED FOR A DOCTOR, I ASSURE YOU.
I AM FEELING LIKE MYSELF AGAIN.


LYING DOESN'T COME EASY TO ME, ESPECIALLY TO AKIKO. BUT THIS IS SOMETHING I MUST HANDLE ALONE. I'VE MANAGED TO SUPPRESS TARAS FOR [illegible] BEING. THAT WILL HAV[illegible] NOW.
THESE PAST FEW DAYS HAVE BEEN CRUCIAL TO GETTING ME BACK ON TRACK, BUT I HAVEN'T ANY MORE TIME FOR DELAY. I MUST RETURN TO THE CAPITAL CITY. NO DOUB[illegible] HERE HAS BEEN A MIX[illegible]STANDING REGARD[illegible]CLOSURE
AND WITH MAYLANDER'S INVASION OF SADA, WE WILL ALL HAVE TO WORK TOGETHER TO PUT THIS [illegible] RIGHT.
SURVEILLANCE OF U.S. COMMUNICATIONS OFFERED NO INDICATION OF ANY ATTACK. MAYLANDER MUST BE FLYING BELOW RADAR FOR HIS ASSAULT. AT LEAST THAT EXPLAINS WHY HIS STRIKE WAS [illegible] TO THE ONE [illegible] WHY SADA [illegible] PLACE?
WHAT'S THIS?
A LEVEL-FIVE CORRESPONDENCE SENT TO MAYLANDER. BUT IT IS UNENCRYPTE[illegible] THAT'S UNUSUAL
M,
Deal. I'll expect shipment within the week. As to your inquiry, try looking deeper at 20°×200° off the Pacific Coastline.
Happy hunting.
S.
THOSE ARE THE COORDINATES FOR SADA. THE MESSAGE ORIGINATE[illegible] JAPAN. TOKYO.
THERE IS ONLY ONE PERSON WHO WOULD HAND OVER SUCH INFORMATION TO MAYLANDER WITHOUT A [illegible] FOR THE RAMIFI[illegible] THE SHARK.
AKIKO!
IT LOOKS LIKE I'LL BE GOING TO JAPAN BEFORE RETURNI[illegible] HOME.


JAPAN.
WHAT'S THE MATTER, AKIKO?
NOTHING. I JUST... MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE GONE WITH THE OTHER DRESS. I MEAN, DO I LOOK ALRIGHT IN THIS?
YOU LOOK JUST FINE. TRUST ME.
BUT... EVERYONE IS STARING.
DRIVER, TAKE US TO THE DENDOU DAIKOKU.
YES, SIR.
DENDOU DAIKOKU? WE'RE NOT EVEN STOPPING BY THE YOUR RESIDENCE FIRST?
SORRY, NO TIME. I DON'T WANT TO MISS THE MAN I CAME TO SEE
PERHAPS, I SHOULD JUST WAIT IN THE CAR. THE DENDOU DAIKOKU IS AN EXTREMELY UPSCALE ESTABLISHMENT. I AM NOT DRESSED APPROPRIATELY.
NONSENSE. WE'LL MAKE A QUICK STOP ALONG THE WAY AND GET YOU SOMETHING TO WEAR.


MR. HAWKE, WHO IS THIS "SHARK" AND WHY WAS IT SO IMPERATIVE THAT YOU COME TO JAPAN TO FIND HIM?
HIS REAL NAME IS SHALLA BARNIC, BUT HE PREFERS TO GO BY HIS SELF-PROCLAIMED NICKNAME. HE HAS MADE A FORTUNE OVER THE YEARS IN OIL, DEEP SEA RIGS, MAINLY. LET'S JUST SAY HE HAS A NOSE FOR THE AREA.
BUT WHATEVER MONEY HE MAKES IN OIL IS NOTHING COMPARED TO HIS OTHER ENDEAVOR AS AN ARMS DEALER. HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY QUALMS ABOUT HIS CUSTOMERS EITHER. GOVERNMENTS, REBELS, TERRORISTS-- HE'LL SELL ANYTHING TO ANYONE. HELL, HE'D PROBABLY SELL SOMEONE A GUN EVEN IF HE KNEW THEY WERE GOING TO TRY TO KILL HIM WITH IT.
WHAT IS IT YOU WANT WITH HIM?
I'VE COME ACROSS SOME INFORMATION THAT SUGGESTS HE SOLD SENSITIVE INFORMATION TO THE U.S. MILITARY THAT MAY HAVE LEAD TO FRIENDS OF MINE GETTING HURT. AND IF THAT IS THE CASE, THEN I GUESS I'M AFTER A LITTLE PAYBACK.
WELL... WELL, WELL. CANNON HAWKE IN MY DENDOU. TALK ABOUT A FISH OUT OF WATER.
IF YOU GIVE ME BUT A MOMENT, I'LL MAKE SOME ROOM FOR YOU AT MY TABLE.
BUT I SHOULD WARN YOU, THE CARDS ARE BEING ESPECIALLY KIND TO ME THIS EVENING.
THAT'S FINE, BECAUSE I WON'T BE.
SUCH [illegible] LOVE IT.
DON'T WORRY, GENTLEMEN. CANNON HAWKE IS MANY THINGS, BUT ABOVE ALL ELSE HE IS CIVILIZED. WHATEVER BRINGS HIM HERE, I AM SURE WE CAN DISCUSS IT LIKE RATIONAL ADULTS.

IT SEEMS THAT CERTAIN PERSONNEL IN THE U.S. MILITARY HAVE BECOME QUITE FIXED ON A PARTICULAR AREA OF THE *PACIFIC OCEAN* ALONG THE *20TH PARALLEL*, AND I WAS HOPING YOU MIGHT *ENLIGHTEN* ME AS TO THE SOURCE OF THAT INTEREST.
YOU KNOW ME, CANNON. THE OCEAN IS MY PLAYGROUND. OF COURSE, I AM REFERRING TO THE POTENTIAL OIL DEPOSITS RIPE FOR EXTRACTION. PERHAPS THOSE IN THE U.S. MILITARY ARE MERELY KEEPING TABS ON A POSSIBLE RIG SITE SO CLOSE TO THEIR BORDERS.
I MEAN, *WHAT ELSE* COULD THERE BE IN THE DEPTHS OF THE OCEAN THAT WOULD BE OF INTEREST TO ANYONE?
NINE.
SEVEN. WINNER MR. BARNIC.
I *WARNED* YOU THAT THINGS WERE GOING MY WAY.
YOU OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW THAT WHEN YOU MOVE FORWARD WITH ANY OCEAN PROJECT, YOU HAVE TO BE AWARE OF DAMAGING THE ECOSYSTEM THAT ALREADY EXISTS; OTHERWISE, YOU RISK THE SURVIVAL OF YOUR ENTIRE ENTERPRISE.
CARD?
NO.
SUCH AN OBVIOUS BLUFF. YOU KNOW THAT WHEN IT COMES TO MONEY, I DON'T TURN AWAY EASILY.
EIGHT.
NINE. WINNER MR. HAWKE.
THEN PERHAPS NEXT TIME I WILL HAVE TO *PUSH* A LITTLE HARDER.
I'LL BE SEEING YOU AGAIN.
OF THAT, I HAVE NO DOUBT.

FIRST THING TOMORROW, I WANT YOU TO LOOK INTO SHALLA'S OIL OPERATION. FIND OUT IF HE IS PREPARING A NEW EXCAVATION ALONG THOSE COORDINATES, OR ANYTHING FOR THAT MATTER. I WANT TO KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT WHAT HE IS WORKING ON.
NO PROBLEM.
THAT'S HIM.
START SCANNING.
I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK HE'D NEVER SHOW HIMSELF.
WELL, ANO, DOES HE HAVE IT?
CHECKING NOW.
I THINK WE FOUND IT.
YES, THERE WE GO. I KNEW CANNON WOULD THINK IT WAS THE ONLY SAFE PLACE TO KEEP IT. GO TONIGHT, ANO. I WANT THAT SUBSTANCE BEFORE MORNING. EAGER BUYERS AWAIT.
YES, SIR.

YES, EVERYTHING IS FINE.
AKIKO, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. I'LL CALL YOU FIRST THING IN THE MORNING AND WE CAN MEET UP FOR BREAKFAST.
ENJOY YOUR STAY IN THE CITY TONIGHT WITH YOUR FRIENDS.

WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?

SHALLA WARNED US ABOUT THIS.
WHERE THE HELL DID HE GO?
I'M RIGHT HERE.

BE SURE TO TELL SHA'LA THAT HE'LL HAVE TO DO BETTER THAN THIS IF HE WANTS TO GET RID OF ME.
YOU *FLATTER* YOURSELF THINKING HE VIEWS YOU AS A *THREAT.*
AHHHHHH!

GOT IT.
WHAT EXACTLY IS IT? IT LOOKS LIKE WATER.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE SPECIFICS. IT WILL FETCH A HEFTY PRICE; THAT IS ALL THAT MATTERS.
I'LL GET THIS TO SHALLA. THE REST OF YOU WILL TAKE CARE OF OUR *DELIVERY BOY* BACK THERE.
RWWRRRR.

WHAT?
OH, NO...
IS THERE NO END TO THIS MADNESS?
TO BE CONTINUED IN...
#2

ASPEN

VOL. 1

#2

OF 5

COVER A

FATHOM

CANNON

H A W K E

MICHAEL TURNER

VOLUME ONE

Issue Two of Five

Paladin of the Elite Council

Defender of the First Circle

Guardian of the Nine Seas

Heir of Vallon

AMBASSADOR

TEACHER

HERO

Michael Turner's Fathom

CANNON HAWKE

J.T. Krul — Story

Marcus To — Pencils

Don Ho — Inks

Avalon's Rob Ro & Beth Sotelo — Colors

Dreamer Design — Letters

Fathom Created by — Michael Turner

Digital Editors: Frank Mastromauro, Vince Hernandez | *Design and Production:* Josh Reed, Mark Roslan, Peter Steigerwald | *Lettering font designed by:* Dreamer Design

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MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM: CANNON HAWKE™ Vol. 1 Issue 2

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I DO SO LOVE IT WHEN THINGS GO AS PLANNED.

WERE THERE ANY PROBLEMS?

GOOD. PUT THEM IN SAFEKEEPING.

YES, SIR.

WHAT ARE THESE VIALS? WHY ARE THEY SO VALUABLE?

DO YOU REMEMBER THAT BIZARRE INCIDENT WITH THE *BLUE SUN* AWHILE BACK? WELL, THESE REMNANTS ARE THE FRUIT OF THAT LABOR. IT MAY LOOK LIKE WATER, BUT IT HAS BEEN *SUPERCHARGED*. ALL THAT IS NEEDED IS THE MEANS TO EXTRACT THE ENERGY.

AND HOW DO YOU EXTRACT IT?

NOTHING WE WEREN'T PREPARED FOR.

BEATS ME. LEAVE THAT TO THE BRAINS OF THE PEOPLE WHO ARE BUYING THEM.

GET THE BOAT READY. WE'RE LEAVING TONIGHT. BUT IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I FEEL THE NEED TO *REJUVENATE* WITH A NICE LONG SWIM.

I SWEAR YOU ARE THE ONLY PERSON I KNOW WITH A FRESH SPRING WATER POOL.

WHAT CAN I SAY; I HATE THE SMELL OF *CHLORINE*.

NOT THIS

HELLO, CANNON.

IN THE FLESH.

NOT AGAIN.

DAD.

...SO TO SPEAK.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT I LIKE WHAT I HAVE DONE TO THE PLACE. MAKES ME FEEL RIGHT AT HOME.

FITTING... SEEING AS I'M ABOUT TO BECOME THE PERMANENT RESIDENT.

NOT A CHANCE.

IT'S NOT UP TO YOU ANYMORE. EVER SINCE WE WERE JAMMED TOGETHER BY MY MOTHER'S SPELL, I HAVE BEEN GROWING STRONGER AND STRONGER.

THIS BODY AND THIS MIND [illegible] TO ME.

YOU THINK THIS IS JUST SOME BAD DREAM YOU NEED TO WAKE UP FROM?

I CAN FEEL YOUR LACK OF CONVICTION. YOU CAN'T HIDE THE FACT THAT YOUR GRASP IS SLIPPING AWAY.

SHUT UP!

ENOUGH!

DON'T YOU GET IT, CANNON?

YOU'RE WIDE-AWAKE.

BY THE WAY, LAST NIGHT WAS FUN.

YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE LOOKS ON THOSE GUYS' FACES WHEN I SHOWED UP.

AFTER THEY KNOCKED YOU OUT, THEY THOUGHT THEY HAD IT MADE...

...THEN, BANG!

WHOOPS. I GUESS I DON'T KNOW MY OWN STRENGTH.

<SORRY ABOUT THAT.>

<NICE VIEW.>

<EXCUSE ME?>

<SORRY.>

FROM JAPANESE

THE POLICE ARE STILL WORKING THE CRIME SCENE BACK AT YOUR PLACE. ARE YOU SURE THEY DIDN'T TAKE ANYTHING? YOU PROBABLY WON'T BE ABLE TO STAY THEIR TONIGHT, SO I MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOU AT THE *PARK HYATT.* IT HAS BECOME SOMEWHAT OF A SCENE EVER SINCE *LOST IN TRANSLATION,* BUT YOU STILL CAN'T BEAT THE AMENITIES.

THANK YOU. AS LONG AS THERE IS BED, I AM SURE I WILL BE FINE.

ANY IDEA WHO THOSE MEN WERE THAT ATTACKED YOU LAST NIGHT? DID THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH *SHALLA?*

HE JUST WANTED TO MAKE SURE I FELT WELCOMED.

MR. HAWKE, I HAVE BEEN WORKING FOR YOU FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW, AND AS AN EMPLOYEE I HAVE ALWAYS TRIED TO RESPECT YOUR PRIVACY. THAT BEING SAID, I CANNOT JUST KEEP SILENT WHILE YOU FALL TO PIECES.

I HAVE TO ASK... *WHAT IS WRONG?*

CANNON?

I DON'T REALLY KNOW, *AKIKO.* LATELY, IT IS AS THOUGH MY MIND HAS BEEN WORKING AGAINST ME. I AM *PLAGUED* BY A VOICE THAT IS *NOT* MY OWN, AFFECTING NOT ONLY MY THOUGHTS BUT EVEN MY ACTIONS. I'M FIGHTING TO MAINTAIN CONTROL, BUT THERE ARE TIMES WHEN I FEAR I AM *LOSING* THAT BATTLE.

WHAT YOU ARE DESCRIBING... IT SOUNDS LIKE *SCHIZOPHRENIA.*

I KNOW.

PERHAPS I SHOULD MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH *DOCTOR TIKARA.* YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN SO STRONG, HANDLING THE MOST INTENSE OF SITUATIONS. BUT NOW I SEE YOUR STRUGGLE EACH TIME I LOOK INTO YOUR EYES. WITH ALL THAT YOU MUST COPE WITH IN YOUR JOB, MAYBE YOU SHOULD TALK TO SOMEBODY.

PLEASE... I...

IT'S OKAY, AKIKO.

I JUST DON'T WANT TO SEE ANYTHING HAPPEN TO YOU.

I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN. I REALLY DO.

BESIDES, I *AM* TALKING TO SOMEBODY. I'M TALKING TO *YOU.*

NOW... TELL ME WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED ABOUT MY GOOD FRIEND, SHALLA.

AS MUCH AS I'D LIKE TO PUT EVERYTHING ELSE ASIDE AND FOCUS ON THIS PROBLEM, THERE IS TOO MUCH AT STAKE. YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO TRUST ME WHEN I SAY THAT FOR NOW, I CAN HANDLE IT.

"I INVESTIGATED THE COORDINATES YOU GAVE ME WITH REGARD TO SHALLA'S COMPANIES, AND THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANY PROJECT CONNECTED WITH THAT LOCATION— CURRENTLY UNDERWAY OR EVEN IN DEVELOPMENT.

"IN FACT, SHALLA'S ENERGY COMPANY, *ELITE ENERGIES*, SEEMS TO BE IN A TRANSITION PERIOD FROM *ENERGY EXTRACTION* TO *ENERGY PRODUCTION*, SPENDING A GREAT DEAL OF RESOURCES IN *HYDROPOWER*.

"AS FOR SHALLA'S BUSINESS PRESENCE IN THE AREA, ASIDE FROM CORPORATE OFFICES DOWNTOWN AND REAL ESTATE CAPITAL IN THREE HIGH-RISES, SHALLA IS STILL OPERATING A LUCRATIVE FREIGHT LINE OUT OF THE *PORT OF TOKYO*."

"I DON'T EVEN HAVE TO GUESS WHAT'S IN THE BRIEFCASE. MY FRIEND FROM THE *DMZ MR. TAKASHI* DIED OVER WHATEVER IS IN [illegible] VIAL. I SHOULD HAVE BEEN [illegible] WITH IT.

"NOW THAT YOU'VE GOT WHAT YOU WANTED FROM ME, SHALLA, WHAT'S [illegible]

SE

DAMMIT.

RUMBLE RUMBLE RUMBLE

VRRROOOOOOOOOOOMM!

NOT SO FAST, SHA

WE'VE GOT UNFINISHED

LOOKS LIKE CANNON IS STILL UPSET ABOUT THE OTHER NIGHT.

HE'S ALWAYS HAD SUCH A PROBLEM WITH LETTING GO. IT'S ALMOST ANNOYING. HANDLE THIS. I DO NOT WANT TO BE LATE TONIGHT.

DON'T WORRY. YOU WON'T.

AHHHH!
WATCH IT!
WHERE IS HE? I CAN'T SEE HIM!

THERE! FIRE!

ONCE I FOUND OUT YOU WERE BACK IN TOWN, CANNON, I THOLGHT IT WOULD PROVE USEFUL TO MONITOR THE POLICE SCANNERS.

HELLO, *YOSHIRO*. THIS IS JUST A MATTER OF STOLEN PROPERTY. NOTHING OF CONCERN TO YOU OR THE *JIEITAI*.

IF THAT WAS THE CASE, WHY DIDN'T YOU SIMPLY FILE A REPORT LIKE ANYONE ELSE?

I DID NOT WANT TO BURDEN THEM WITH MY PROBLEMS. BESIDES, THE MAN RESPONSIBLE IS SHALLA BARNIC, AND I KNOW WHAT KIND OF *FRIENDS* HE HAS HIDDEN AWAY IN YOUR POLICE FORCE.

MUCH HAS CHANGED IN YOUR TIME AWAY, CANNON. SHALLA HAS MORE FRIENDS THAN YOU KNOW...

...ESPECIALLY SINCE HE STARTED *HELPING* US AT THE JIEITAI.

ISLAND OFF THE COAST OF JAPAN.

JAPAN THANKS YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE, SHALLA.

I'M HAPPY TO DO WHAT I CAN FOR THE COUNTRY I CALL MY HOME. NOT TO MENTION THE FACT THAT YOU PAY REALLY WELL.

MR. YAMAGUCHI, PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE NEW SAMPLES INDICATE A *ONE-HUNDRED PERCENT* MATCH WITH OUR SPECIMEN ALONG ALL EIGHTY-SEVEN MOLECULAR POINTS.

WE ARE READY TO INITIATE AMALGAMATION.

PROCEED.

IT REALLY IS AMAZING, SHALLA. THE SUBSTANCE MAINTAINS ITS AUTONOMY FROM THE OTHER LIQUID WITHIN THE CYLINDER. AT FIRST, WE THOUGHT IT HAD TO DO WITH MASS-- THIS NEW SUBSTANCE HAS A DENSITY ALMOST *THREE TIMES* THAT OF ORDINARY WATER. BUT WE DEVELOPED THIS HOUSING SOLUTION TO EQUAL IN DENSITY, AND STILL IT REMAINS INTACT.

AMALGAMATION COMMENCING.

DENSITY INCREASING... 3.37... 3.38... 3.39.

AMALGAMATION COMPLETED.

IN ITS LIQUID FORM, THIS *GRAY MATTER* REMAINS IN FLUX AT THE MOLECULAR LEVEL, PASSING ELECTRONS BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN ITSELF-- LITERALLY *CREATING* ITS OWN *ENERGY* SIMPLY AS A RESULT OF *PROXIMITY.*

A PERPETUAL KINETIC ENERGY OF *LIMITLESS* POTENTIAL.

EXACTLY. AS A NATION, WE RELY TOO HEAVILY ON OUTSIDERS TO MAINTAIN OUR WAY OF LIFE. BUT *NO MORE...* THE TIME HAS COME TO END OUR ENERGY DEPENDENCE. JAPAN *CAN* AND *WILL* TAKE CARE OF ITSELF-- IN *EVERY* CAPACITY.

THIS PATH OF MINE HAS PROVEN TO BE VERY COSTLY.

I HAVE GIVEN A GREAT DEAL OF MYSELF AND HAVE LOST EVEN MORE.

BUT ULTIMATELY, I HAVE TO BELIEVE THAT IT IS WORTH IT. I MUST HAVE FAITH IN THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FINAL GOAL.

ALTHOUGH KILLIAN'S PREVIOUS ATTEMPT TO CHANGE THE TIDE OF THE WORLD FAILED, OUR FIGHT CONTINUES. YOU MAY BE LOST TO ME, BROTHER...

...BUT DO NOT WORRY TARAG.

BRANNA WILL SEE THIS THROUGH TO THE VERY END.

TO BE CONTINUED IN...

ASPEN

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OF 5

Cover A

FATHOM CANNON HAWKE

VOLUME ONE
Issue Three of Five

PALADIN OF THE ELITE COUNCIL
DEFENDER OF THE FIRST CIRCLE
GUARDIAN OF THE NINE SEAS
HEIR OF VALLON

AMBASSADOR
TEACHER
HERO

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM

CANNON HAWKE

J.T. KRUL
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Colors

DREAMER DESIGN
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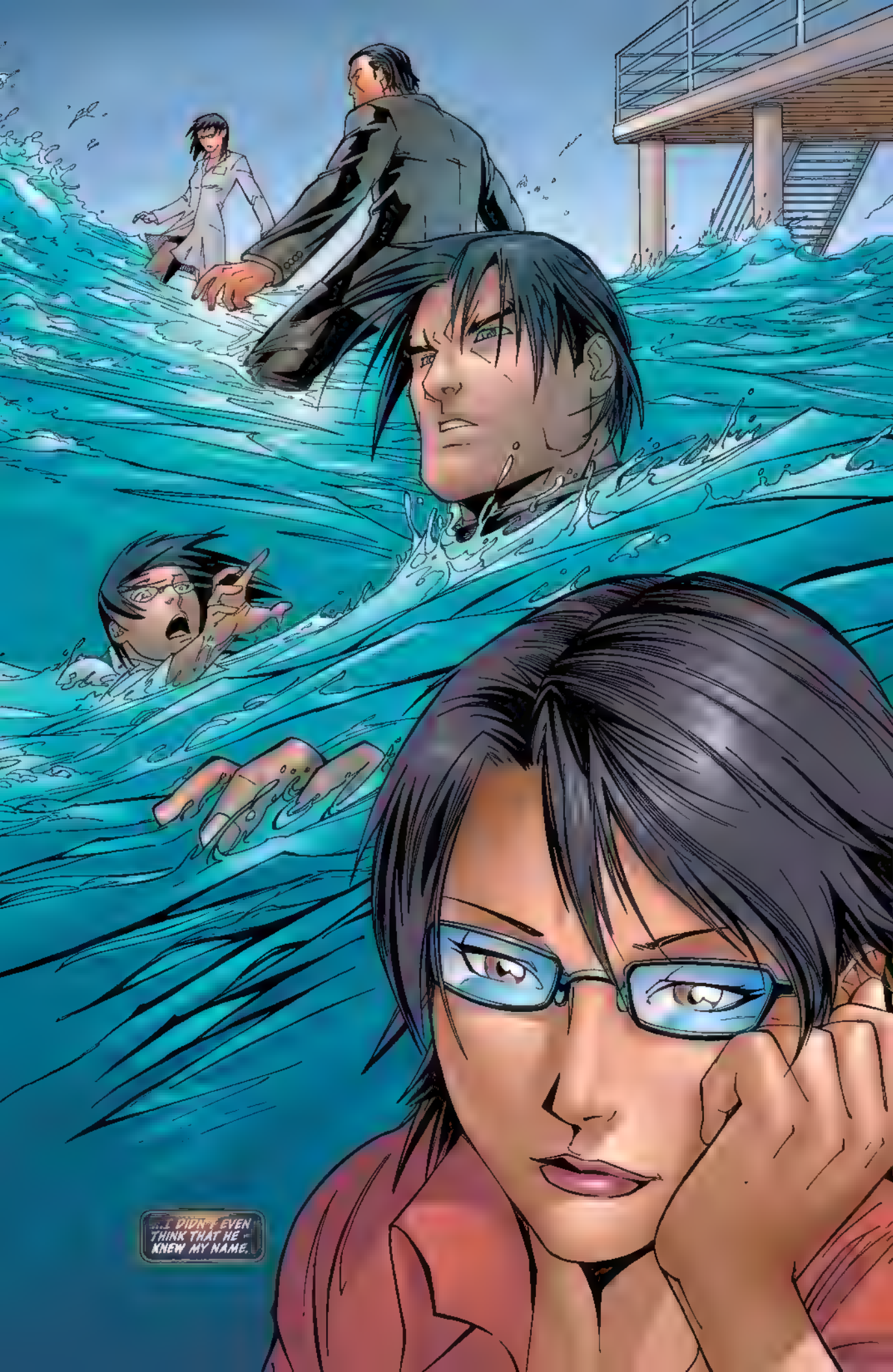
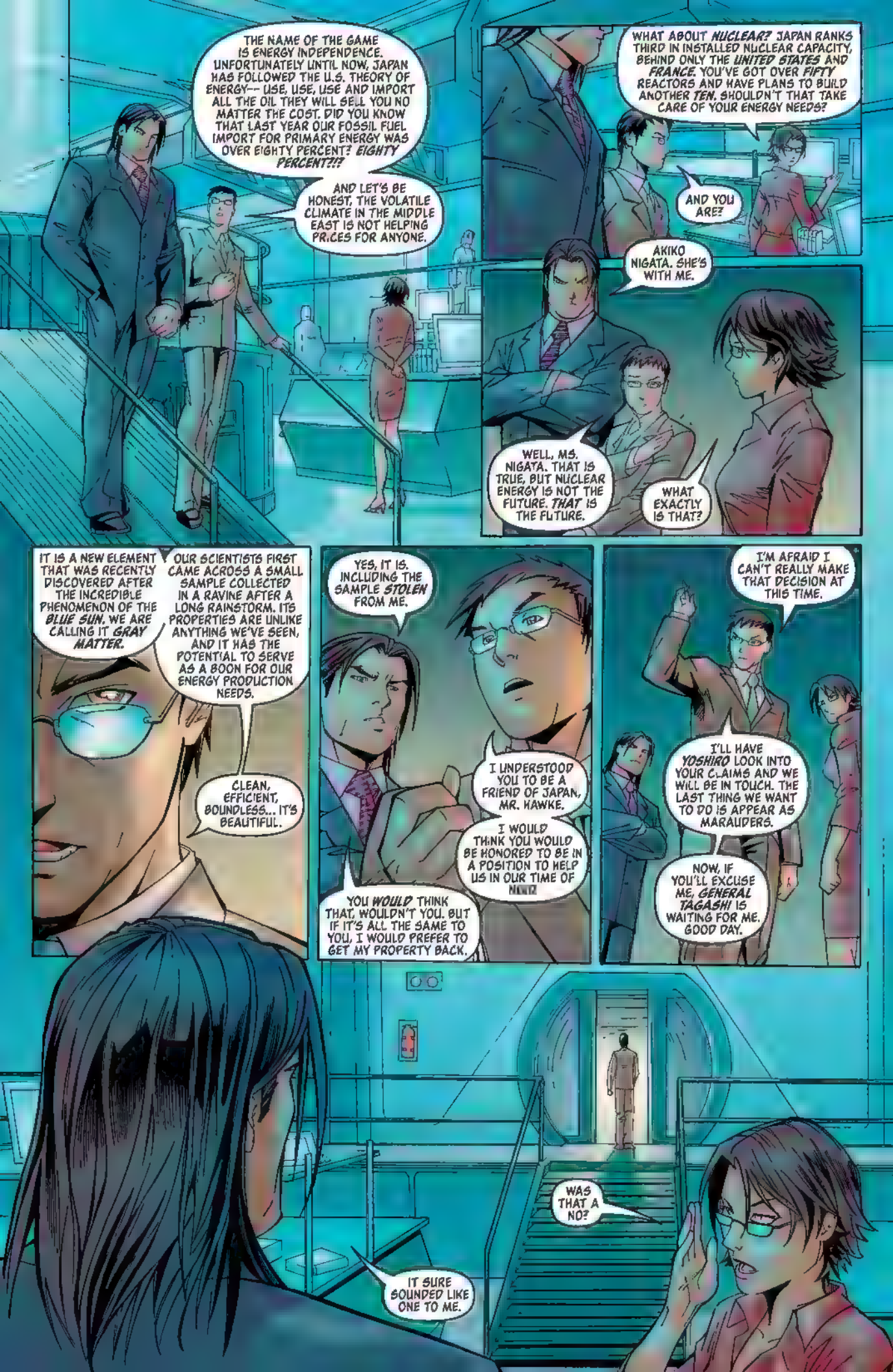
I FIRST MET CAPTAIN HAWKE DURING MY TIME AS A ANALYST WITH THE DEEP MARINE DISCOVERY— A JOINT VENTURE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN THAT HAD BECOME SOMEWHAT STRAINED OVER THE YEARS.
ALL I KNEW ABOUT THE MAN WAS THAT HE WAS SOMETHING OF AN EMISSARY FOR THE TWO SIDES.
AND...THAT HE EXUDED A GRACE AND CONFIDENCE I HAD ONLY READ ABOUT IN NOVELS.
WE DIDN'T COME TOGETHER AS MUCH AS WE WERE THROWN TOGETHER WHEN THE DMD WAS DESTROYED BY A STRAY TORPEDO.
I'D BETTER GIVE THEM A HAND, MR. HAWKE.
NO, COME WITH ME, AKIKO. I'LL NEED ANOTHER COOL HEAD IN THE OPERATIONS ROOM.
AS THE SITUATION WENT FROM BAD TO WORSE, ALL I COULD THINK WAS...


I DIDN'T EVEN THINK THAT HE KNEW MY NAME.

AFTERWARDS, I KNEW I NEEDED A CHANGE. SO WHEN I DISCOVERED THAT CANNON WAS LOOKING FOR AN ASSISTANT, I JUMPED AT THE OPPORTUNITY.
IN MY TIME WITH HIM, I HAVE GROWN TO UNDERSTAND HIM, BUT I DON'T KNOW IF I'LL EVER TRULY KNOW HIM.
YOU ENJOYING THE VIEW?
SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
YOU REALLY DIDN'T HAVE TO COME, YOU KNOW?
I KNOW. I WANTED TO BE HERE FOR YOU.
PLUS, THIS WAY I'LL SEE EVERYTHING FIRSTHAND AND YOU WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT WHAT TO TELL ME AND WHAT TO KEEP TO YOURSELF, ONLY TO HAVE ME *PRY* IT OUT OF YOU LATER ON.
THAT'S WHAT MAKES YOU SO VITAL, AKIKO-- YOUR *EFFICIENCY.*
THERE IT IS!
THAT'S A *POWER STATION?*
IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING.

SO THAT'S WHAT ALL THIS IS ABOUT? AN EIGHT-FOOT *LAVA LAMP?*
IT IS MUCH MORE THAN THAT, MS. NIGATA.
I *WAS* BEING FACETIOUS.
MUST HAVE BEEN LOST IN THE TRANSLATION.
AS YOU CAN SEE WE'VE ACQUIRED MORE THAN JUST YOUR SAMPLE.
I JUST WONDER IF *SHALLA* USED THE SAME *METHODS* IN OBTAINING ALL OF YOUR SAMPLES.
TELL ME, IS THE *JIEITAI* WORKING WITH COMMON *THIEVES* NOW?
SHALLA'S METHODS DO NOT CONCERN US, MR. HAWKE. ONLY HIS RESULTS.
CANNON, THIS IS *MR. YAMAGUCHI.* HE IS IN CHARGE OF THIS OPERATION.
IS THAT A YES?
IT'S ALL FOR THE GOOD OF OUR CAUSE.
AND WHAT CAUSE IS THAT?
ENERGY, OF COURSE.


THE NAME OF THE GAME IS ENERGY INDEPENDENCE. UNFORTUNATELY UNTIL NOW, JAPAN HAS FOLLOWED THE U.S. THEORY OF ENERGY-- USE, USE, USE AND IMPORT ALL THE OIL THEY WILL SELL YOU NO MATTER THE COST. DID YOU KNOW THAT LAST YEAR OUR FOSSIL FUEL IMPORT FOR PRIMARY ENERGY WAS OVER EIGHTY PERCENT? EIGHTY PERCENT?!?
AND LET'S BE HONEST, THE VOLATILE CLIMATE IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS NOT HELPING PRICES FOR ANYONE.
WHAT ABOUT NUCLEAR? JAPAN RANKS THIRD IN INSTALLED NUCLEAR CAPACITY, BEHIND ONLY THE UNITED STATES AND FRANCE. YOU'VE GOT OVER FIFTY REACTORS AND HAVE PLANS TO BUILD ANOTHER TEN. SHOULDN'T THAT TAKE CARE OF YOUR ENERGY NEEDS?
AND YOU ARE?
AKIKO NIGATA. SHE'S WITH ME.
WELL, MS. NIGATA. THAT IS TRUE, BUT NUCLEAR ENERGY IS NOT THE FUTURE. THAT IS THE FUTURE.
WHAT EXACTLY IS THAT?
IT IS A NEW ELEMENT THAT WAS RECENTLY DISCOVERED AFTER THE INCREDIBLE PHENOMENON OF THE BLUE SUN. WE ARE CALLING IT GRAY MATTER.
OUR SCIENTISTS FIRST CAME ACROSS A SMALL SAMPLE COLLECTED IN A RAVINE AFTER A LONG RAINSTORM. ITS PROPERTIES ARE UNLIKE ANYTHING WE'VE SEEN, AND IT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO SERVE AS A BOON FOR OUR ENERGY PRODUCTION NEEDS.
CLEAN, EFFICIENT, BOUNDLESS... IT'S BEAUTIFUL.
YES, IT IS. INCLUDING THE SAMPLE STOLEN FROM ME.
I UNDERSTOOD YOU TO BE A FRIEND OF JAPAN, MR. HAWKE.
I WOULD THINK YOU WOULD BE HONORED TO BE IN A POSITION TO HELP US IN OUR TIME OF NEED.
YOU WOULD THINK THAT, WOULDN'T YOU. BUT IF IT'S ALL THE SAME TO YOU, I WOULD PREFER TO GET MY PROPERTY BACK.
I'M AFRAID I CAN'T REALLY MAKE THAT DECISION AT THIS TIME.
I'LL HAVE YOSHIRO LOOK INTO YOUR CLAIMS AND WE WILL BE IN TOUCH. THE LAST THING WE WANT TO DO IS APPEAR AS MARAUDERS.
NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, GENERAL TAGASHI IS WAITING FOR ME. GOOD DAY.
WAS THAT A NO?
IT SURE SOUNDED LIKE ONE TO ME.

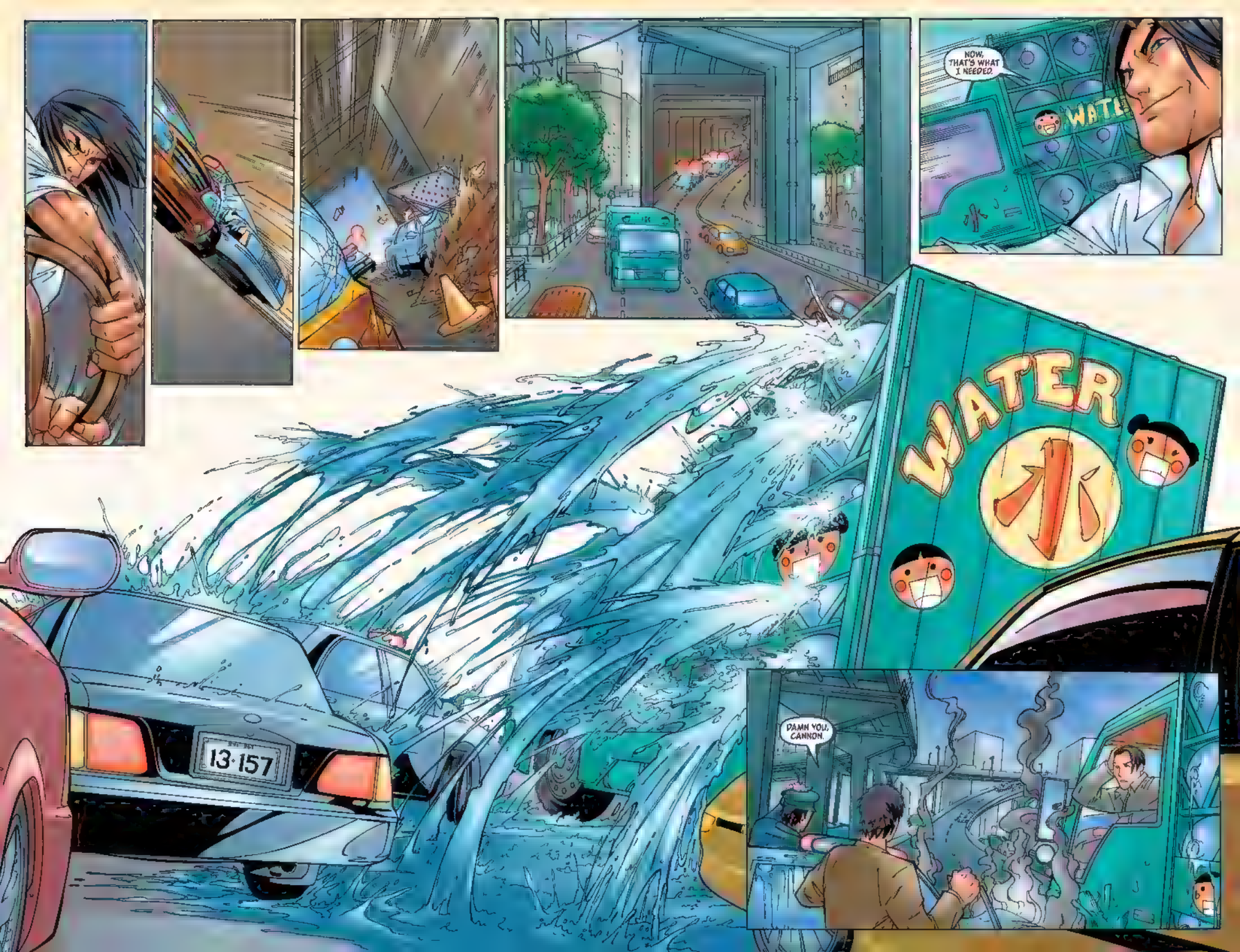
<LOOK AT THE READING FOR OUTTAKE VALVE THREE.>
<THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. THE SCANNER MUST BE MALFUNCTIONING. RECALIBRATE THE SENSOR.>
<I DID... TWICE. THE SENSOR IS FUNCTIONING PROPERLY.>
<BUT THAT WOULD MEAN THE WATER IS BACKFLOWING.>
<WE'VE GOT A BREACH IN PRESSURE! SHUT IT DOWN! NOW!>
<TOO LATE!>
TEXT FROM JAPANESE

AHHHH!!
IT APPEARS SHALLA'S INFORMATION WAS ACCURATE THIS TIME.
FINALLY, OUR SEARCH IS OVER.

DID YOU SLEEP WELL?
I'VE HAD WORSE.
I LEFT MESSAGES WITH YOSHIRO'S OFFICE, BUT SO FAR HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO GET IN TOUCH WITH HIM.
I'M NOT SURPRISED.
THESE GUYS ARE LIKE ANY OTHER OFFICIALS. THEY ONLY ACKNOWLEDGE YOU WHEN THEY NEED SOMETHING FROM YOU.
I GUESS THEY NEED US.
I WANT HIM IN CUSTODY--- NOW!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
DO NOT INSULT ME. FIRST YOU CREATE SOME STORY ABOUT HOW SHALLA STOLE ONE OF THE SAMPLES FROM YOU, AND THEN THE VERY NIGHT AFTER YOUR VISIT, OUR FACILITIES ARE ATTACKED... NO DOUBT BY YOUR AMERICAN CONTACTS.
YOSHIRO TRIED TO ASSURE ME THAT YOU WERE AN IMPARTIAL EMISSARY BETWEEN OUR TWO NATIONS, BUT IT IS OBVIOUS THAT YOU'VE TAKEN SIDES.
WHATEVER HAPPENED, I HAD NO PART. WHAT MAKES YOU THINK THE AMERICANS ARE INVOLVED?
THEY FEEL THEIR GRASP AS GREATEST SUPERPOWER IN THE WORLD SLIPPING. THEY NEED ENERGY MORE THAN WE DO.
LAST NIGHT'S ATTACK WAS JUST LIKE THE ATTACK ON ONE OF OUR MINING RIGS OFF THE COAST OF NEW ZEALAND. THE U.S. DENIED THAT ATTACK AS THEY WILL SURELY DENY THIS ONE AS WELL.
WHAT HAPPENED?
THE SAMPLES OF THE GRAY MATTER WERE STOLEN.
STOLEN?
I SAID ARREST HIM! AND THE GIRL TOO!
UM, CANNON...

STOP THEM!
HEY!
ARE YOU SERIOUS? A *HYUNDAI*? YOU COULDN'T OUTRUN *ME* IN THIS THING.
JUST BUCKLE UP.

ARE YOU SURE THIS IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO?
I MEAN... YOU WEREN'T RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BREAK-IN, *WERE* YOU?
NO. BUT I DON'T FEEL LIKE SITTING AROUND A HOLDING CELL FOR WEEKS WAITING FOR THEM TO FIGURE OUT THAT SHALLA *DOUBLE-CROSSED* THEM.
IT'S ONE OF HIS FAVORITE TRICKS. HE SELLS THE GOODS TO ONE PARTY, THEN COLLECTS ANOTHER SMALL FEE FOR INFORMING A SECOND INTERESTED PARTY AS TO WHERE THEY CAN GET THEIR HANDS ON IT.
WHO DO YOU THINK THAT SECOND PARTY IS?
THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO ASK SHALLA.
AHHHHH!
YOU OKAY?
JUST TELL ME WHEN IT'S OVER.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SAID YOU WANTED TO SEE EVERYTHING FIRSTHAND.
I TAKE IT BACK.


NOW, THAT'S WHAT I NEEDED.
WATER
DAMN YOU, CANNON.

I HAD TO PAY DANIEL A BONUS FOR GETTING H.M OFF ANOTHER JOB IN ORDER TO FLY US OUT OF HERE.
NO PROBLEM.
YOU'RE NOT COMING, ARE YOU?
NO. I NEED TO FIND SHALLA.
WHY DON'T I STAY AND HELP YOU?
KNOWING THAT YOU ARE SAFE FROM ALL OF THIS... THAT WILL HELP ME.
WHY DO YOU INSIST ON DOING THIS ALL ALONE?
I'LL BE FINE.
I'D REALLY LIKE TO BELIEVE THAT, CANNON.
SO WOULD I.
SO WOULD I.

ELITE ENERGIES CORPORATE OFFICES.
TEN STINGERS? OF COURSE, I'M INTERESTED. SET IT UP.
LOOKS LIKE WE'RE HEADED TO IRAN THIS WEEK. NOTHING LIKE A LITTLE INTOLERANCE TO BOOST BUSINESS.

HELLO AGAIN, SHALLA. MISS ME?
TO BE HONEST... NO. PERHAPS IF YOU DIDN'T SEEM SO INTENT ON DESTROYING ALL MY PROPERTY.
FUNNY YOU MENTION PROPERTY BECAUSE I'VE COME TO COLLECT MINE. I KNOW YOU DOUBLE-CROSSED YAMAGUCHI. WHO HAS THE SAMPLES NOW?
I'M SURE I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT. PERHAPS MY ASSOCIATE CAN ASSIST YOU.
YOU'VE MET *AND*, HAVEN'T YOU?
IF HE DOESN'T REMEMBER ME, HE'LL CERTAINLY REMEMBER THIS
STEP ASIDE. IT'S YOUR ONLY WARNING.
CANNON, LET ME TAKE CARE OF THIS ONE

NNNNHHHHH.
THANKS. THAT FELT GOOD.

NOW, SHALLA... WHERE WERE WE?
TYPICAL. ALWAYS RUNNING FROM YOUR FIGHTS.
YOU'RE PATHETIC.
KILLING ANO LIKE THAT WAS BRUTAL, CANNON. EVEN FOR YOU.

YOU HAVE NO IDEA.
BUT YOU WILL.
ARE YOU READY TO SEE *FIRSTHAND* WHAT THIS DEVICE DOES TO THOSE LIKE US?
WAIT... WAIT. THE GRAY MATTER. IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT? I DON'T MIND TELLING YOU, I DON'T HAVE IT, BUT I KNOW WHO DOES.
A FRIEND OF YOURS ACTUALLY...
...BIRANHA.
BIRANHA?
MY BROTHER?!?
IT CAN'T BE.
AHH? YOU'RE ALIVE?!?

DIRANHA!!!
YOU HAVE TAKEN SO MUCH FROM ME, CANNON, THAT I ALMOST FORGOT THE ROLE YOU PLAYED IN MY BROTHER'S DEMISE. BUT HE FIGHTS ON. DIRANHA IS STRONG.
AS. AM. I.
NOOOOO!

I DO NOT KNOW HOW LONG THIS BLACKOUT LASTED. BUT I DO KNOW ONE THING.
SHALLA IS GONE.
HE IS THE LEAST OF MY WORRIES NOW. IF DIRANHA HAS THE GRAY MATTER CREATED DURING THE BLUE SUN, THERE IS NO TELLING WHAT HE MAY DO WITH IT. YAMAGUCHI MAY HAVE BEEN INTERESTED IN POWERING A CITY WITH THE SUBSTANCE, BUT DIRANHA COULD USE IT FOR DESTROYING A CITY... OR MORE.
I HAVE TO STOP HIM, BUT I CANNOT DO IT ALONE. I NEED HELP.
I KNOW MY FRIENDS WILL TRUST ME, EVEN AFTER WHAT I'VE DONE.
BUT WILL THEY ONCE THEY LEARN THE SECRET THAT I CARRY INSIDE OF ME?
TO BE CONTINUED IN...
CANNON #4

ASPEN
Vol. 1
#4
OF 5
Cover A
FATHOM
CANNON
HAWK
MICHAEL TURNER

Digital Editors: Frane Mastromauro, Vince Hernandez | *Design and Production:* Josh Reed, Mark Roslan, Peter Steigerwald | *Lettering font designed by:* Dreamer Design

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MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM: CANNON HAWKE™ Vol. 1 Issue 4

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FORE,
WE USED TO SHAKE OUR HEADS AT THE WAY THE HUMANS WOULD CONSTANTLY FIGHT AMONG THEMSELVES BUT WE AR FFERENT.
WE ALL TAKE OUR STANCES WITH THE BEST INTENTIONS AND STICK TO THEM THOSE OF US LOYAL TO THE COUNCIL AND THE DISSIDENTS SEEKING CHANGE NOT TO MENTION LEST CAUGHT SOMEWHERE
EACH SIDE BELIEVING IN THEIR HEARTS THAT THEY ARE MAKING THE RIGHT
NEITHER ONE WILLIN BEND.

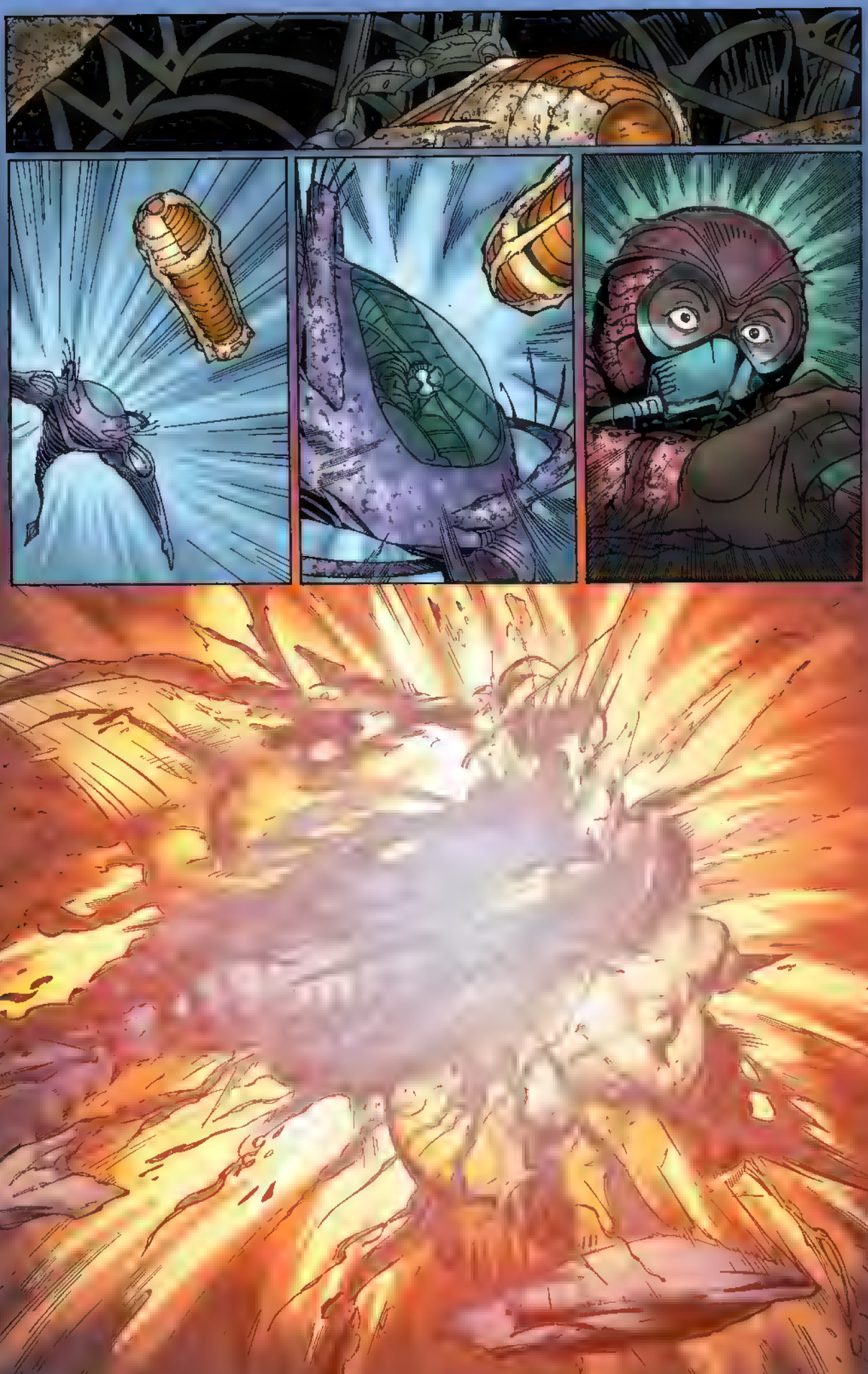
...UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE

THE ARCTIC TUNDRA OF THE PLANET IS VAST, BUT THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THIS IS WHERE
I WAS WORRIED WHEN THE GRAY MATTER WAS IN THE HANDS OF THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT, BUT THINGS ARE EVEN WORSE NOW THAT BIRANHA POSSESSES IT. THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT DEVASTATION IT COULD CAUSE BY UNLEASHING
I KNEW THAT HELP WOULD BE NEEDED, AND I'M LUCKY THAT GRANDE, THALASSAR, AND KREEG HAVE JOINED ME. ALTHOUGH I AM A BIT SURPRISED ABOUT KREEG. THE LAST TIME I SAW HIM, HE WAS PLACED IN CHAINS FOR DISOBEYING THE COUNCIL.
ATHOM 46 FOR DETAILS.
OF COURSE WITH THE SPIRIT OF TARAS SWIRLING AROUND INSIDE MY MIND, I WOULD EXPECT ALL PAIRS OF THEM TO WATCH ME WITH SUSPICIOUS EYES.
HOW CAN I EXPECT THEM TO TRUST ME, WHEN EVEN I CAN'T TRUST MYSELF?

CANNON! SCANNERS ARE PICKING UP A SIGNAL... TWO OF THEM!
EVERYBODY, HOLD ON!

GUESS YOU SHOULD HAVE USED A BIT MORE *STEALTH* AS WE APPROACHED THEIR TERRITORY.
HAVING THEM FIND *US* WAS THE BEST WAY TO FIND *THEM*. OTHERWISE, WE MIGHT HAVE BEEN COMBING THROUGH MILES OF ICE CAVERNS FOREVER.
BESIDES... THIS ISN'T ANY-THING I CAN'T HANDLE.
AHHHHH!

CANNON, HE'S RIGHT BENEATH US!
I KNOW.



IS THIS WHERE VANA'S PALACE USED TO BE? WHERE SHE FUSED YOU AND TARAS TOGETHER?
NO... THAT PLACE NO LONGER EXISTS
JUST BEFORE SHE DIED, VANA LASHED OUT WITH THE LAST REMNANTS OF HER POWER AND DESTROYED HER OWN PALACE.
I DON'T KNOW IF IT WAS DUE TO HER LOVE FOR TARAS OR HER HATRED FOR ME... PERHAPS IT WAS A BIT OF BOTH.

IF I DIDN'T KNOW ANY BETTER, I'D THINK THAT I HEARD SYMPATHY IN YOUR VOICE, CANNON. OR IS IT TARAS SPEAKING NOW?
GIVE IT A REST, KREEG. CANNON HAS ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH WITHOUT YOU PESTERING HIM.
I COULD CARE LESS ABOUT CANNON.
IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN WHY DID YOU VOLUNTEER TO HELP US?
BECAUSE IF THE DISSIDENTS HAVE GAINED ACCESS TO THIS GRAY MATTER, THEY THREATEN THE SECURITY OF OUR PEOPLE.
IT'S OKAY, BRANDE. KREEG IS RIGHT. THIS ISN'T ABOUT ME. THIS IS ABOUT STOPPING BIRANHA.
AND IF WE'RE GOING TO BE SUCCESSFUL, WE'LL ALL NEED TO WORK TOGETHER.
I'M GLAD YOU REALIZE THAT, CANNON. NOW, FOLLOW ME, I SEE A LIGHT DOWN THIS BRANCH OF THE TUNNEL.
KREEG, WAIT.
CRACK!

KREEG!
HOLD ON! CANNON, CAN'T YOU USE YOUR POWERS?
NOT HERE; IT'S TOO COLD. THERE'S NO WATER... ONLY ICE.
WE'RE LOSING HIM.
I KNOW. WE CAN'T PULL HIM FREE. THEIR GRIP IS TOO TIGHT.
NO!
YOU CAN'T ABANDON ME, CANNON!

THEY'RE TRYING TO PULL HIM BELOW. LET'S BEAT THEM TO IT.
KKERRRAGKKK!

CANNON! YOU DEFILE THE MEMORY OF MY MOTHER WITH YOUR PRESENCE. WE HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN THE PAIN YOU CAUSED THE LAST TIME YOU WERE HERE.
I HAD NO REASON TO BE HERE LAST TIME. VANA WAS THE ONE WHO KIDNAPPED ME. BUT THIS TIME, I DO.
WE'VE COME FOR THE GRAY MATTER, BIRANHA.

IT BELONGS TO US. THIS GRAY MATTER. ONLY WE KNOW THE TRUE POTENTIAL IT CARRIES.
YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE RETURNED HERE, CANNON. BUT WE ARE GLAD YOU DID. OUR VENGEANCE WILL BE EVEN SWEETER KNOWING THAT YOUR CORPSE WILL ROT BENEATH OUR FEET FOR ALL ETERNITY.
NOT WHILE WE'RE STILL BREATHING!

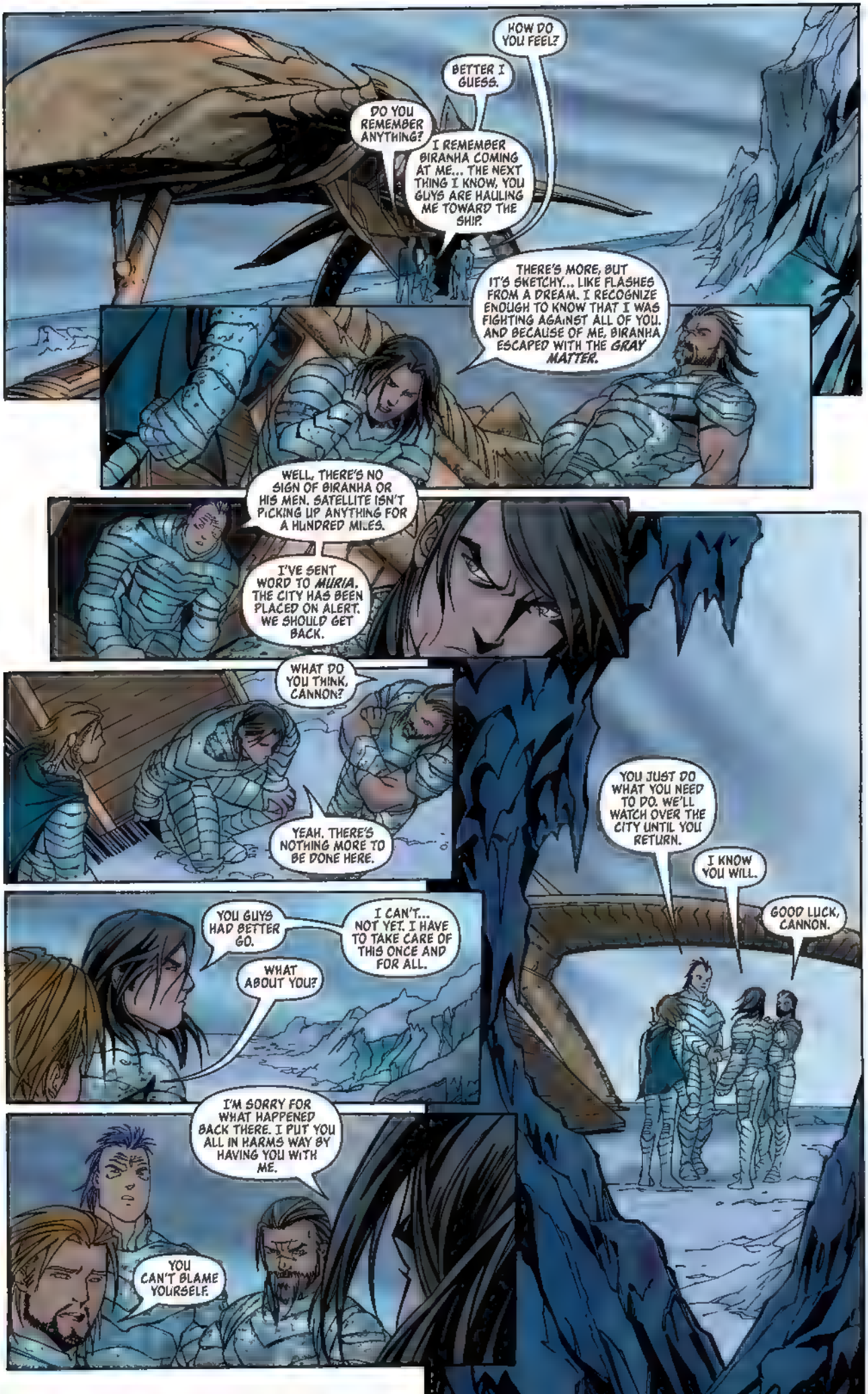
HOLD HIM. MINE WILL BE THE HAND TO SERVE OUT OUR JUSTICE.
NOW, CANNON...
...IT IS TIME TO PAY!
ANHY! NO!
T...TARAS?
YES, IT'S ME. MOTHER'S EXPERIMENT ONLY HALF FAILED. I LIVE ON, BUT TRAPPED WITHIN CANNON'S MIND.
IT... IT IS YOU!
MY BROTHER!
WE THOUGHT YOU WERE LOST FOREVER.

THANKS FOR THE DISTRACTION, CANNON. I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE
BIRANHA!
I'LL KILL YOU FOR THAT!
BIRANHA, WE MUST LEAVE
BUT... MY BROTHER
WE CANNOT JEOPARDIZE OUR MISSION. YOU KNOW THIS.
CANNON, THEY ARE GETTING AWAY!

CANNON, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!?
CANNON? SORRY, TRY AGAIN.
TARAS.
NOW, YOU'VE GOT IT.
CAN YOU HEAR ME, CANNON? I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU...
...BUT I KNOW YOU'LL UNDERSTAND IF I DO.
FIGHT HIM, CANNON. REGAIN CONTROL.
I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

CANNON!
CAN YOU HEAR ME IN THERE?
I ALREADY TOLD YOU...
...I AM TARAS!

TARAS.
CA... CANNON.
IT'S TOO LATE. YOU'RE FINISHED HERE.
NO... WE
IS HE DEAD?
NO... JUST UNCONSCIOUS.
LET'S GET HIM OUT OF THIS PLACE.


HOW DO YOU FEEL?
BETTER I GUESS.
DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING?
I REMEMBER BIRANHA COMING AT ME... THE NEXT THING I KNOW, YOU GUYS ARE HAULING ME TOWARD THE SHIP.
THERE'S MORE, BUT IT'S SKETCHY... LIKE FLASHES FROM A DREAM. I RECOGNIZE ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT I WAS FIGHTING AGAINST ALL OF YOU. AND BECAUSE OF ME, BIRANHA ESCAPED WITH THE *GRAY MATTER*.
WELL, THERE'S NO SIGN OF BIRANHA OR HIS MEN. SATELLITE ISN'T PICKING UP ANYTHING FOR A HUNDRED MILES.
I'VE SENT WORD TO *MURIA*. THE CITY HAS BEEN PLACED ON ALERT. WE SHOULD GET BACK.
WHAT DO YOU THINK, CANNON?
YEAH. THERE'S NOTHING MORE TO BE DONE HERE.
YOU JUST DO WHAT YOU NEED TO DO. WE'LL WATCH OVER THE CITY UNTIL YOU RETURN.
I KNOW YOU WILL.
GOOD LUCK, CANNON.
YOU GUYS HAD BETTER GO.
I CAN'T... NOT YET. I HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF THIS ONCE AND FOR ALL.
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
I'M SORRY FOR WHAT HAPPENED BACK THERE. I PUT YOU ALL IN HARMS WAY BY HAVING YOU WITH ME.
YOU CAN'T BLAME YOURSELF.

OKAY, TARAS, IT'S TIME YOU AND ME HAD A LITTLE CHAT.
TO BE CONCLUDED IN...
#5
CANNON

ASPEN
VOL. 1
#5
OF 5
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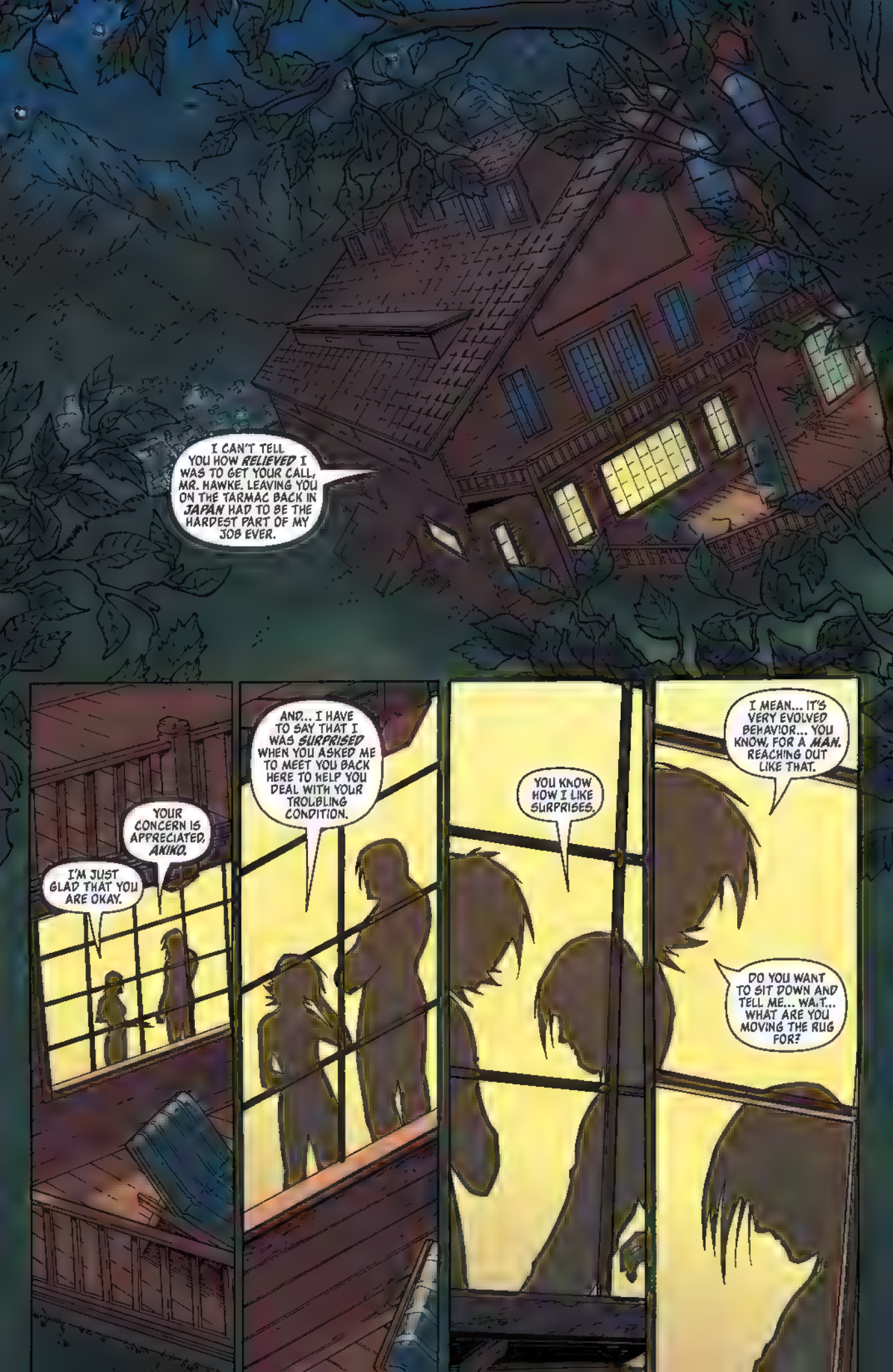

I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW *RELIEVED* I WAS TO GET YOUR CALL, MR. HAWKE. LEAVING YOU ON THE TARMAC BACK IN *JAPAN* HAD TO BE THE HARDEST PART OF MY JOB EVER.
I'M JUST GLAD THAT YOU ARE OKAY.
YOUR CONCERN IS APPRECIATED, *AKIKO.*
AND... I HAVE TO SAY THAT I WAS *SURPRISED* WHEN YOU ASKED ME TO MEET YOU BACK HERE TO HELP YOU DEAL WITH YOUR TROUBLING CONDITION.
YOU KNOW HOW I LIKE SURPRISES.
I MEAN... IT'S VERY EVOLVED BEHAVIOR... YOU KNOW, FOR A *MAN.* REACHING OUT LIKE THAT.
DO YOU WANT TO SIT DOWN AND TELL ME... WA.T... WHAT ARE YOU MOVING THE RUG FOR?

I'LL TELL YOU EVERYTHING, AKIKO. BUT FIRST, I NEED YOU TO FOLLOW ME.

WHAT'S UNDERNEATH THIS HATCH, CANNON?
SURE... A LADDER LEADING DOWN... BUT DOWN TO WHAT?
YOU'LL SEE.
A BOMB SHELTER? WOW, YOU THINK YOU SORT OF BARELY KNOW A GUY.
IT WOULD APPEAR I HAVE SOME EXPLAINING TO DO. IT MIGHT NOT BE EASY TO HEAR...

PERHAPS IT WOULD BE EASIER IF I TOLD YOU WHAT I ALREADY KNOW. YOU'RE NOT FROM AROUND *HERE* ARE YOU? YOU COME FROM BELOW OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
HOW DID YOU KNOW?
THE GUY IN THE TANK AT THE *DMD*, AND THE SHIP WE WERE RESEARCHING, WAS MY BIG CLUE THAT THE OCEAN WAS A BIT MORE *INHABITED* THAN WE ALL THOUGHT. IT WAS OVERWHELMING AT FIRST; BUT ONCE I WRAPPED MY HEAD AROUND IT, IT WASN'T TOO HARD TO SEE WHERE YOU FIT IN WITH ALL OF THIS.
SAVING ME FROM THE DESTRUCTION OF THE DMD... YOUR OBSESSION WITH ALL THINGS RELATING TO THE OCEAN... AND LET'S FACE IT, HOW MANY YACHTS DID YOU LOSE OUT AT SEA OVER THE YEARS? *NOBODY* IS THAT SCATTERBRAINED.
OH, AND THERE WERE ALL THE TIMES YOU SHOWED UP OUT OF THE BLUE, PARDON THE PUN, SMELLING LIKE KELP.
I...I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY. WHY DIDN'T YOU EVER TELL ME ABOUT YOUR DISCOVERY?
I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS MY PLACE. WHO AM I TO TELL YOU WHEN TO COME OUT OF THE CLOSET... SO TO SPEAK.
ONCE THE HARD PART WAS OVER, I EXPLAINED THE SITUATION REGARDING TARAS TO AKIKO. I TOLD HER HOW HE WAS THE OTHER VOICE IN MY HEAD, AND THAT IT WAS MUCH MORE THAN JUST A VOICE. IT WAS ANOTHER SPIRIT INVADING MY MIND—

AND I TOLD HER ABOUT MY SECURE ROOM AND WHAT I NEEDED FROM HER.
I AM COUNTING ON YOU, AKIKO.
TO DO WHAT EXACTLY?
TO KNOW WHEN TO LET ME OUT... TO KNOW WHEN I'VE DEFEATED TARAS ONCE AND FOR ALL.
AND... WHAT IF HE WINS?
THEN HEAD BACK UP AND LEAVE ME LOCKED IN HERE FOREVER.
CANNON... I...
GOOD LUCK.

HE'S MUCH STRONGER THAN EVER BEFORE. THIS IS A CONSTRUCT OF MY MIND, AND YET I CANNOT FEEL ANY OF MYSELF IN ALL HIS DOING.
UP UNTIL NOW, TARAS HAS ALWAYS BROUGHT THE FIGHT TO ME.
NOT ANYMORE. THIS TIME, I AM HUNTING FOR HIM.
TARAS!!!

SO...
YOU'VE FINALLY DECIDED TO STOP HIDING FROM ME.
DESPITE MY SURROUNDINGS, I HAVE TO REMEMBER..
...THIS IS MY MIND!
RAAWRRRR!
AND I HAVE POWER TOO.

CANNON!
AKIKO... AKIKO. IT IS FINISHED.
OPEN THE DOOR.
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
AKIKO LET ME OUT.
I'M SORRY.
AKIKO... PLEASE.
NO.

SUCH DESPERATION. YOU ATTACK AS IF YOU KNOW EACH SWING MIGHT BE YOUR LAST.
I'M GOING TO BURY YOU UNDER THE RUBBLE OF THIS TEMPLE OF YOURS, TARAS.
IS THAT SO?
HERE.
LET ME HELP YOU.

YOUR MIND IS MINE TO MANIPULATE.

REMEMBER THIS, CANNON? THE SITE OF OUR LITTLE *REUNION.*

I ONLY WISH MY MOTHER COULD HAVE REALIZED AT THE TIME JUST HOW CLOSE SHE CAME TO SUCCEEDING WITH HER PLANS.

NOT AS CLOSE AS YOU THINK, TARAS.

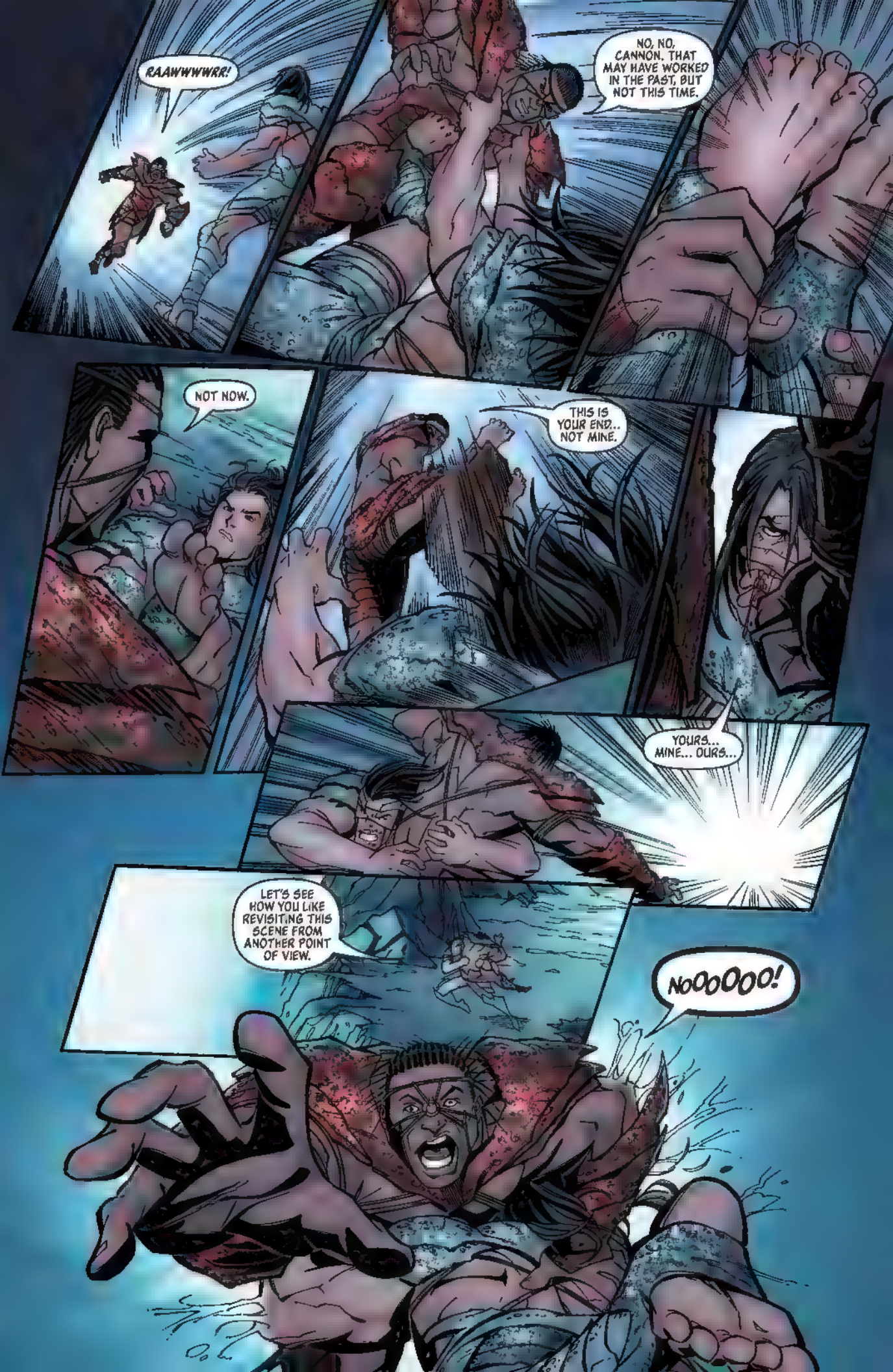
THIS MEMORY OF YOURS FILLS ME WITH SUCH RAGE I CAN BARELY CONTROL MYSELF.

BUT THEN, WHY SHOULD I LIMIT MYSELF LIKE THAT ANYWAY?

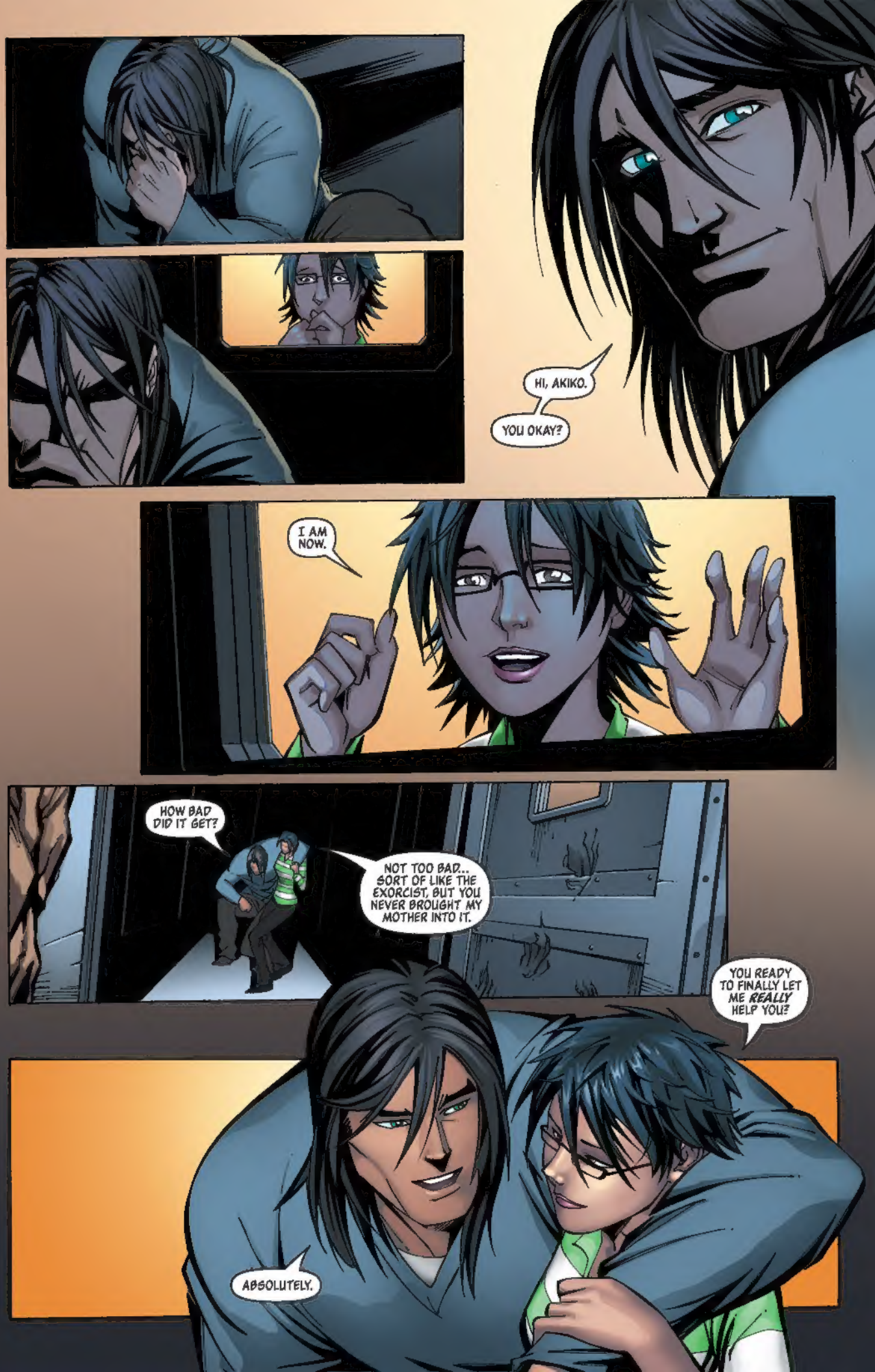
AKIKO... I SEE THE WAY YOU LOOK AT ME. I KNOW THE *DESIRE* IN YOUR HEART. YOU CANNOT HIDE IT FROM ME.
HOW LONG ARE WE GOING TO KEEP BARRIERS BETWEEN US? OPEN THE DOOR AND LET ME SHOW YOU HOW MUCH YOU MEAN TO ME.
DEAR, SWEET AKIKO.
DAMN HUMAN!
I *WILL* GET OUT OF HERE. I'LL KILL CANNON AND THEN I WILL KILL YOU! WHAT A SIGHT IT WILL BE... KILLED AS YOU LOOK INTO THE FACE THAT YOU ADORE.
BANG!
YOU HEAR ME!
BANG!
BANG!
BANG!
BANG!
PLEASE, CANNON. FORGIVE ME.

THESE ARE MY MEMORIES HE IS USING AGAINST ME...
...THERE HAS TO BE A WAY TO STOP HIM.
WAIT... MY MEMORIES...
MY... MEMORIES...
HUH?
NO...

WE'VE DWELLED ON YOUR HIGHLIGHTS LONG ENOUGH, TARAS. IF IT'S MEMOR.ES YOU WANT, THIS IS MY FAVORITE MEMORY OF YOU.
CHANARNAY.


RAAWWWWRR!
NO, NO. CANNON. THAT MAY HAVE WORKED IN THE PAST, BUT NOT THIS TIME.
NOT NOW.
THIS IS YOUR END... NOT MINE.
YOURS... MINE... OURS...
LET'S SEE HOW YOU LIKE REVISITING THIS SCENE FROM ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW.
NOOOOOO!

AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!


HI, AKIKO.
YOU OKAY?
I AM NOW.
HOW BAD DID IT GET?
NOT TOO BAD... SORT OF LIKE THE EXORCIST, BUT YOU NEVER BROUGHT MY MOTHER INTO IT.
YOU READY TO FINALLY LET ME *REALLY* HELP YOU?
ABSOLUTELY.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG WHILE, MY MIND IS COMPLETELY AT REST AND I CAN RELAX IN THE SOOTHING SOUND OF SILENCE.
BUT EVEN THOUGH TARAS NO LONGER HAUNTS MY MIND, SOMETHING ELSE NAGS AT ME. NO DOUBT THE TURMOIL CONTINUES BACK IN MURIA WITH REGARD TO THE HUMANS. AS MUCH AS I WOULD LIKE TO STAY HERE, I CANNOT HIDE FROM MY DUTY.
NO REST FOR THE WICKED I SUPPOSE.
YOU'RE UP EARLY.
CAN'T SLEEP?
I FEEL LIKE ALL I'VE BEEN DOING IS SLEEPING THESE PAST FEW DAYS.
IT'S JUST YOUR BODY'S WAY OF TELLING YOU TO TAKE IT EASY.
WHAT?
YOU'RE LEAVING AGAIN, AREN'T YOU? I CAN ALWAYS TELL. YOU GET THAT DISTANT LOOK IN YOUR EYE.
I'M SORRY, AKIKO. BUT I'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO MY WORLD. THIS CONFLICT WITH MAYLANDER IS FAR FROM OVER.
JUST DON'T FORGET THAT THIS IS YOUR WORLD TOO, CANNON.
I WON'T.

IS HE REALLY GONE? TARAS, I MEAN.
YES. AS GONE AS HE CAN BE. THE SHOCK OF WITNESSING HIS OWN DEATH WAS TOO MUCK FOR HIM. THE MIND CAN ONLY HANDLE SO MUCH; AND WHILE HE SPENT SO MUCH TIME HAUNTING MINE, HE FORGOT TO TAKE CARE OF HIS OWN.
HE'S GONE... AND HE'S *NOT* COMING BACK.
AND WHAT ABOUT YOU? WILL YOU BE BACK?
OF COURSE. YOU KNOW ME.
YEAH, I KNOW YOU.
AKIKO... I... WHAT WAS THAT FOR?
JUST WANTED TO MAKE SURE YOU WON'T WAIT *TOO* LONG BEFORE COMING BACK TO THIS WORLD.

THERE IS A WORLD ABOVE AND A WORLD BELOW.
THE TASK HAS FALLEN TO ME TO KEEP THEM BOTH SAFE... FROM EACH OTHER, AND FROM THEMSELVES.
IN THE WORLD ABOVE, I AM AN EMISSARY BETWEEN THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD.
IN THE WORLD BELOW, I AM ELITE COMMANDER OF COUNCIL DEFENSE.
IN BOTH, I AM KNOWN AS CANNON HAWKE.